

April 2023

Formerly Arkansas Professional Engineer

Building Arkansas

Official Magazine of the American Council of Engineering Companies of Arkansas & the Arkansas Society of Professional Engineers

A man and a woman are standing on a wooden walkway in a park setting. The man, on the left, is wearing a blue and white checkered button-down shirt, blue jeans, and brown shoes. The woman, on the right, is wearing a blue sweater, black pants, and black shoes. They are both smiling at the camera. In the background, there are trees and a large wooden structure, possibly a playground or a viewing platform.

A rambling concept

Olsson's work on Fayetteville's Lower Ramble cultural arts corridor won the Grand Conceptor Award at the ACEC/A's Engineering Excellence Awards Gala Evening March 9. The event's top engineering project is part of an effort to tie together the city's arts districts while creating a beautiful urban park setting in a previously unapproachable area. The project is Arkansas' first to achieve SITES certification by the Sustainable Sites Initiative – basically, LEED for landscaping. Chris Dougherty, P.E., was project manager, while Erika Hall was a designer.

ACEC/A seeks board members, hosts training

Nominations are being accepted for positions on the ACEC/A board of directors between now and May 12.

If you are interested in serving, please contact Angie W. Cooper, ACEC/A executive director, at 501.912.4099 or at awcooper@arkansasengineers.org.

...

ACEC/A will host the Principals Academy, the Zweig Group's flagship training program designed for executives of architecture/engineering/construction service firms, May 17-18 at the Hilton Garden Inn West Little Rock.

The training will encompass the critical aspects of managing a firm, including leadership, strategy, organizational design, performance management, recruiting, marketing, business development, and project management.

The training is designed for presidents and CEOs, C-suite executives, experi-



Clinehens

Smith

enced principals, new principals/owners, emerging leaders, leaders/managers of market sectors, project managers, and senior design and technical staff.

Zweig Group has a 30-plus-year history of working with AEC firms and uses a comprehensive data set of industry benchmarks and best practices. The training will be led by Chad Clinehens, P.E., Zweig Group president and CEO, and Justin Smith, S.E., P.E.

Registration is \$1,795 for ACEC/A members and \$1,895 for non-members. Attendees can earn six professional development hours or .6 continuing education credits.

For more information and to register for training, go to [this link](#).

...

The ACEC Deep South Convention bringing together owners and key principals from Arkansas, Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi will be July 21-23 at the Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort at Miramar Beach, Florida.

The convention offers insightful programs and seminars at a family-friendly venue, as well as the annual Deep South Golf Tournament and Deep South Fishing Tournament.

To register and to get more information, go to <https://arkansasengineers.org/acec-deep-south-convention>.

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22 Chris Dougherty, P.E., project manager, and designer Erika Hall stand at The Lower Ramble in Fayetteville, this year's winner of the Grand Conceptor Award at the Engineering Excellence Awards Gala Evening March 9.

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Arkansas lawmakers in this year's legislative session changed the state's education system, voted to require criminal offenders to serve more of their sentences, and cut income taxes. They also declined to enact contracting reforms sought by engineers.

20 **IIJA investing billions in Arkansas**

Arkansas is receiving billions of dollars as a result of the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and it is taking steps to spend the money appropriately for highways, broadband and other needs.

22 **Cover / Olsson project wins Grand Conceptor**

A project where Olsson helped create a cultural arts corridor in Fayetteville won the Grand Conceptor Award at the Engineering Excellence Awards Gala Evening March 9, while a bridge replacement by Michael Baker International won the People's Choice Award.

DESIGNING SOME OF THE MOST COMPLEX AND INNOVATIVE BRIDGE STRUCTURES IN ARKANSAS



*Palarm Creek Bridge Replacement, Pulaski County, Arkansas
2023 Structural Systems Project Winner & People's Choice Award Winner*

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*I-40 Hernando de Soto Bridge Emergency Repairs
2022 Structural Systems Project Winner*



*De Roche Creek Lateral Bridge Slides
2021 Structural Systems Project Winner*

Completed or Underway in Arkansas Since 2020:

- 30+ New or Replacement Bridges
- 3 New Railroad Overpasses
- 370+ Bridge Rehabilitations

Watch out for these three terms in contracts

Standard of care, **additional insured**, and **duty to defend** are terms you may or may not have come across in your career. They are important elements of our engineering and surveying contracts, and we all need to understand how they can negatively impact our companies.

The **standard of care** clause is a common element of our contracts created to hold our work to a standard that is in line with what would be expected of other engineers working on similar projects in the same region. However, in some contracts our clients will add a feel-good word such as “highest” or “best” into the clause’s wording. This is done with good intentions by the author of the contract to try and ensure they will get a mistake-free design.

These additional words can have unintended consequences. Our firms pay for professional liability (PL) insurance to step in when projects don’t go as planned. Adding these feel-good words can nullify our insurance coverage.

The **additional insured** issue occurs when our clients ask us to name their organization as an additional insured on our PL and/or workers’ compensation (WC) insurance policies. They feel they are protecting their organization by requiring this of engineering firms.

There is just one problem with this request - it can’t be done. There is no insurance company that will provide a PL or WC policy that adds our clients in a meaningful way. This confusion exists because we can add them as additional insured on policies such as commercial general liability (CGL) and auto insurance, but not PL and WC policies.

The **duty to defend** is the worst of the three elements. You see this in our contracts as: “agrees to indemnify, defend and hold Owner harmless...” When



Jerry Holder, P.E.
ACEC/A President

we sign a contract with this language in it, we are opening our firm to potential uninsured defense costs.

Let’s say your firm designs a roadway widening. A distracted driver seriously injures one of the contractor’s workers during construction. The worker sues the owner, the contractor, your firm,

and the driver for damages. If the word “defend” is in the contract you signed, the owner can have you start paying for their legal defense on day one, before any liability is assigned by a court of law. Let’s say after two years the judge dismisses your firm from the case finding your design was not at fault. There is nothing that says the owner must reimburse your firm for the costs you have incurred paying their legal fees. And to make it worse, your PL insurance doesn’t cover this, so you had to pay for it out of your firm’s bank account.

ACEC of Arkansas attempted to get these three items changed in this current legislative session. Our efforts were opposed by the Association of Arkansas Counties, Arkansas Municipal League, and the Arkansas AGC. Turns out they like having us defend them at our cost.

We are going to regroup and take on this legislation again in the 2025 legislative session with a new strategy. We will need your help to make this effort to protect our firms from financial risks successful. In about a year you will be hearing more about this effort and how you can help our engineering profession better protect itself. In the meantime, the ACEC national office has produced some very good educational videos on the subjects of **duty to defend** and indemnification that you can view at <https://program.acec.org/indemnification-and-duty-to-defend>.

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Looking for more like Mary

I guess when it comes to problems, “We’ve got too much business” is a good one to have. It certainly beats the alternative.

But that’s probably the situation that many engineering firms will face in the coming years.

That’s because, for the first time in forever, there’s plenty of government dollars flowing into our industry. At the federal level, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will send to Arkansas billions of dollars for highways, water infrastructure, broadband, public transportation and electric vehicle charging stations. Meanwhile, Arkansas voters in 2020 made the half-cent sales tax for highways permanent.

We will always be in competition to get work on individual projects, but if we don’t get a particular job, there will be another shortly behind it. Money, in other words, will not be the problem. Instead, finding personnel will be. Finding and retaining qualified staff is becoming a big challenge for the engineering profession.

What’s the solution? Not lowering our standards, for sure. Professional engineers must remain professional. The public’s health, safety and welfare depend on it.

Arkansas has not been considered a big engineer market; a big chunk of graduates from this state wind up in traditional large markets in surrounding states. With the growth projections in Arkansas and money flowing, we need to build a wall around the state (to borrow a commonly used metaphor from the college sports world) to keep Arkansas students in Arkansas and get the word out to schools in other states that Arkansas continues to be The Land of Opportunity. It won’t happen overnight, so we’re just going to have to get through the next few years while we work together to grow the profession’s talent pool.

One way to do that is Engineers Week, which this year was Feb. 19-25. Founded by NSPE in 1951, EWeek is a coalition of more than 70 engineering, education and cultural societies partnering with more than 50 corporations and government agencies to raise public awareness about engineers and our contributions.



Kale Farmer, P.E., CFM
ASPE President

This year’s theme was “Creating the Future.” As explained by NSPE President Britt E. Smith, P.E., F.NSPE, in a video, engineers will help solve the challenges facing humanity by working together.

Smith said that educating for the future and promoting diversity are two focus areas of NSPE’s strategic plan. He said the engineering profession must welcome people of all backgrounds in order to meet those needs.

That’s definitely true in Arkansas. Go to an engineers meeting anywhere, and you’ll probably see mostly white males. That’s the way it’s always been.

I’m not trying to be politically correct here; I’m just talking about numbers. We can’t meet the needs of our profession and society, and satisfy our clients’ expectations, if we’re limited mostly to one ethnicity and one gender. Moreover, diversity in the workplace serves the same function that genetic diversity serves: It strengthens the entire community and makes it less vulnerable to a common invader – a virus or, in our profession, blind spots that can emerge when we all think too much alike.

It’s not my fault I’m a white male, and I don’t have a reason to feel guilty about it. But I do have a responsibility to make sure my profession welcomes talented, qualified people who don’t look exactly like me. There are plenty of them out there, and potentially many more who just need a little encouragement.

One hopeful sign is in the listing of officers next to my column. A couple of names below mine is Mary Fair, P.E., of Garver. Mary is the ASPE’s first female board member and is on track to be its first president. As a young woman and a dynamic leader, she’ll be in a position to influence the engineering profession for a long time.

We need more like Mary. In fact, there should be more names on this page and the ACEC/A’s facing one that belong to people of all types and all kinds of backgrounds.

It will make our profession better, and it’s the only way we’re going to get all this work done.

— In the News

Garver named NLR Large Biz of the Year

Garver was honored by the North Little Rock Chamber of Commerce with the 2022 Chairman's Award as the Large Business Partner of the Year. More than 800 Chamber members turned out at Simmons Bank Arena for the event.



Nick

"For more than a century, we've worked with Arkansans across the state to help their communities grow," said Garver Communications Director Laura Nick, who is also chairman-elect of the North Little Rock Chamber of Commerce. "With more than 400 employees in the state, and almost 200 in North Little Rock, we're proud to be a part of this vibrant community and are excited to play a role in its future."


Garver named NLR Large Biz of the Year



Holder

Garver has launched an Enterprise Solutions Team to more efficiently execute project processes from the planning stages through construction.

Under Garver's Enterprise Solutions umbrella will be services that help guide a project through every phase, including analyzing financial feasibility, identifying and implementing the right delivery method, scheduling assistance for complex infrastructure programs, preserving and managing capital assets, and more.



ACEC/A Principals Academy
Hilton Garden Inn West Little Rock
Little Rock
May 17-18

ACEC National Convention
Grand Hyatt Washington
Washington, D.C.
June 11-14

ACEC Deep South Convention
Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort
Miramar Beach, Florida
July 21-23

The team is led by Director of Enterprise Solutions Jerry Holder, P.E., who has more than 35 years of industry experience, including the last 10 years as Garver's director of transportation.

Leading Garver Transportation is Brent Schniers, P.E. A member of Garver's Management Committee since 2019, Schniers has more than 25 years of industry experience working with DOTs and municipalities across the country.



Schniers

Garver marks Engineers Week

Garver knows the importance of inspiring the next generation of engineers. That's why GarverGives, the firm's corporate giving program, focuses on initiatives that promote STEM education. And what better time to do that than EWeek?

Promoted by the National Society of Professional Engineers, Engineers Week

is a celebration of engineers and the influence they have on our world. It's also a rallying cry to address the growing need for engineers as the United States faces a shortage of graduates prepared to enter the industry.

This year, the week was celebrated Feb. 19-25. Garver celebrated EWeek in a variety of ways including raising awareness about the need for future engineers on local TV stations and visiting elementary school classrooms to connect directly with students.

Ark Biz: MBI's Furr biggest firms' only female principal



Furr

Amanda Furr, P.E., Michael Baker International's Little Rock office executive/vice president, was the only woman currently serving as a principal of any of the 15 largest firms in Arkansas,

according to Arkansas Business magazine.

Furr was hired in June 2020 to lead Michael Baker's Little Rock office, which is the firm's largest in the state.

Furr is also proud to represent women in engineering and the transportation industry in her position as membership chair for WTS Arkansas.

MBI hires new Arkansas designers

Michael Baker International has hired several new Arkansas design staff members.

Brendan Barnes, P.E., has joined the Little Rock Roadway Design team as a civil engineer. He holds a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from Oklahoma State University and previously worked for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

In the News continues on page 10



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In the News (Cont'd)



Barnes



Presley



Puckett



Bowie



Gray



Landers

Emma Presley has joined the Little Rock Roadway Design team as a civil associate. She holds a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering and a bachelor of arts degree in studio art from the University of Arkansas.

Erin Bowie has joined the Little Rock Roadway Design team as a civil associate. She previously worked for Michael Baker as a civil intern and with the United States Department of Agriculture as a research technician. She holds a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from Arkansas State University.

William Gray has joined the Little Rock Technical Team as a CADD Technician. He is a member of the Arkansas Society of Professional Surveyors and student member of the American Society of Civil Engineers. He is currently pursuing a bachelor of science degree in civil and construction engineering at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.



Wilson

Christine Wilson has joined the Little Rock Technical Team as a CADD technician. She holds an associate in applied science degree in drafting and design technology from the University of Arkansas at Pultaski Technical College.

Isaiah (Isaac) Puckett, E.I., who had been serving as an intern in Michael Baker's Bentonville office, has accepted a full-time position as a roadway design engineer in Bentonville after his graduation from the University of Arkansas in December 2022. He has earned his bachelor's degree in civil engineering.

Chris Landers has joined Michael Baker International's Bentonville team as a roadway intern. He is a senior at the University of Arkansas, where he is completing his bachelor's degree in civil engineering.

Benchmark's Adams on Rogers-Lowell Chamber



Adams

Jason C. Adams, P.E., executive vice president of Benchmark Group, Inc., was recently elected to serve on the board of the Rogers-Lowell Chamber.

Adams has more than 15 years of experience in leadership at Benchmark Group and is responsible for overseeing production operations and business development. He is a licensed electrical engineer who enjoys engaging staff in new and challenging ways that promote professional development and growth. He also serves on the company's board of directors.

"I am honored to be selected to the Rogers Lowell Chamber Board of Directors," he said. "I look forward to the opportunity to engage with the Chamber and support our community."

Adams and his wife are originally from Iowa but have been in Northwest Arkansas 18 years with their three children. He is active in his local church and has served in various capacities, from teaching children's classes to leading small groups and helping the men's ministry.

In his free time, he enjoys fishing a local bass tournament series and mountain bike riding. He recently started golfing.

Benchmark Group, Inc. is a full-service architecture and engineering firm licensed in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, with offices in Rogers and Dallas.

Crafton Tull hires three engineers in Arkansas

Crafton Tull recently added three professional engineers to its roster of employee-owners. Blake Murray, P.E., CFM, joined the Fayetteville engineering office; Jacob Koch, P.E., is new to the Fort Smith office; and Elena Watson, P.E., has joined the Rogers location.

Murray is a project manager with 11 years of experience ranging from street design to large-scale development. He is a registered professional engineer in Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas as well as a certified floodplain manager. He holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering

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In the News (Cont'd)



Murray



Koch

from Texas A&M University as well as a master's of business administration from Texas A&M University – Texarkana.

Koch is also a project manager for Crafton Tull and most recently worked as a mechanical engineer in Tulsa. He has worked as a design HVAC engineer and construction manager for 10 years. He also has experience in water treatment, drought analysis, water distribution, and drainage analysis. He holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Arkansas and is a registered professional engineer in Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Colorado.

Watson is an environmental engineer with five years of experience in hydraulic modeling, design calculations, and hydraulic reports for existing and proposed conditions for ponds



Watson

and stormwater inlet analyses. She has a bachelor's in civil engineering degree from Kansas State University with an emphasis in environmental engineering and a secondary major in natural resources and environmental sciences. She is a registered professional engineer in Arkansas and Indiana.

Ussery joins Crist Engineers

Morgan Ussery has joined the staff of Crist Engineers.

Ussery is a project engineer with six years of experience in municipal water and wastewater utility design and con-

struction. His experience includes rehabilitation, repair and replacement projects and also building renovation. Major projects include the Heber Springs High service

pump station and the new water plant phase one for the city of Hot Springs.

Prior to joining Crist Engineers, Ussery served six years as project manager for CDI Contractors in Little Rock, where he was responsible for overseeing projects bidding to completion.

He graduated from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville in 2014 with a degree in civil engineering. His professional affiliations include membership in the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Founded in 1938, Crist Engineers offers specialized experience in water treatment and distribution, and wastewater collection and treatment. Other engineering services include planning and construction management for clients in Arkansas and surrounding states.

Hawkins-Weir hires Nichols in Van Buren office



Nichols

Nichols graduated from the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith with a bachelor of applied science degree in December 2008, and then worked for a local civil engineering/surveying firm from 2003 to 2020. He joined HW in January 2023 and has 20-plus years of experience in civil engineering and land surveying in Arkansas.

Hawkins-Weir announces the addition of Josh Nichols to its Van Buren office.

Nichols graduated from the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith with a bachelor of applied science

degree in December 2008, and then worked for a local civil engineering/surveying firm from 2003 to 2020. He lives in Van Buren with wife Dawn and their two children, son Presley, 18, and daughter Kinley, 13. He loves hunting, fishing, and golf. He is also an avid Arkansas Razorbacks baseball fan and Van Buren Pointer fan.



Ussery



Morris



Strain



Zimmerman



Parker



Hales



Hankins

McClelland hires Morris, Strain, promotes others

McClelland Consulting Engineers recently hired two professional engineers.

Christopher Morris, P.E., joined the Fort Smith office as a structural engineer. Morris will provide structural design support company-wide for MCE for a wide range of projects from water/wastewater to land development.

Jonathan Strain, P.E., recently joined the Transportation Department in the

**Hernandez****Tomlinson**

Fayetteville office as a project manager. He has a diverse work background with more than 15 years of experience in civil engineering project management, design, and construction.

In recent years, his work experience has been focused on the construction side of projects – providing construction engineering, administration and management services to a wide array of projects in the Northwest Arkansas area pertaining to transportation, stormwater, land development, and water/wastewater improvements.

McClelland Consulting Engineers also recently promoted several employees.

In January, the Little Rock office promoted Wyatt Parker to senior technician/assistant lab supervisor; Caleb Zimmerman, E.I., to senior project designer; Steve Hales, PLA, to project manager; Edwin Hankins IV, PLA, to senior associate; and Danny Hernandez to associate. Leah Tomlinson from the Fayetteville office also was promoted to associate.

MCE associates earn certifications

Two McClelland Consulting Engineers associates have earned professional certifications.

Will Hopkins, P.E., from the Fayetteville office recently earned his professional engineer license. He started as a geotechnical engineering intern and is now a geotechnical project engineer. Joy Li Zhijao, PLA, who works out of the firm's

**Hopkins****Zhijao**

Land Development Department in Little Rock, is now a professional landscape architect.

TOLM Group's Beck, Watkins are promoted

TOLM Group, a full-service construction and engineering firm headquartered in Central Arkansas, has promoted Josh

In the News continues on page 15



MY ARKANSAS:

Planting roots and building highways.

Ryan Castor wanted to jump-start his career in Arkansas and ended up building a home. Whether designing a highway or helping coach his daughter's basketball squad, Ryan makes sure every team he's on succeeds.

BURNS & McDONNELL

burnsmcd.com

ACEC/A Member Spotlight

Benchmark Group a 'team of choice'

Benchmark Group offers MEP engineering, architectural services under one roof

At Benchmark Group, having many disciplines under one roof – actually, two roofs, and soon to be three – means clients get better service.

The firm's 120,000-square-foot, LEED-certified Silver office in Rogers houses most of its 240 employees, including engineers, architects, and technical staff. It opened a Dallas office in September 2019 that houses 16 staff members and is planning on opening a satellite office in the coming months.

Paul Parks started what became Benchmark Group as an electrical firm in 1978 with a vision to focus on clients and staff members.

The firm now is licensed in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. It offers mechanical, electrical, and plumbing engineering as well as architectural services, construction management and design-build expertise. It offers fire protection and refrigeration design services and can commission completed buildings by verifying that the energy systems are operating properly.

The firm markets itself as its clients' "team of choice." In fact, its website is teamofchoice.com.

"The benefit there is we can say to a client, we have all your engineering in house," said David Kimball, P.E., the firm's president. "We have architecture. The coordination is the benefit there. We can quickly have team meetings and can include those members that we need to, and we can walk down to a desk or get them on Teams and have those conversations and talk about delivery times when those things are needed, and the communication is excellent."

Kimball said teams are often grouped by client with a point person responsible for managing the various disciplines. It keeps the client from having to work through multiple contacts.

Retail, particularly remodeling but also construction, is one the company's



MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL, FIRE PROTECTION PROJECTS. Benchmark Group did the design work from the ground up on the Harp's store in Lowell, top photo. Above left photo is the Vista 21 building in Bentonville. Above right, the refrigeration unit for the Walmart Neighborhood Market at 8th and Walnut in Rogers.

specialties. The firm has done more than 10 multi-story projects. It remodeled the Target in Rogers. Benchmark Group helped the Harp's store in Bella Vista expand, which involved replacing the store's entire HVAC system on both the existing and expanded part of the structure. It also did the design work for the new Harp's store in Lowell. It has done multi-story Walmarts larger than 200,000 square feet.

"In Arkansas, we can't count all the Walmarts we've touched, even in just the last three years," Kimball said.

Other clients have included the Fort Chaffee Joint Maneuver Training Center and Camp Joseph T. Robinson, two National Guard sites where Benchmark Group remodeled ammunition supply points. At Fort Chaffee, it remodeled 14 1940s-era earth-covered magazines that were approximately 80 feet by 30 feet and

tended to be infiltrated with water and even snakes. The project involved multiple above-ground buildings. Similar work was done at Camp Robinson.

In addition to large projects for major clients, the firm also does projects for smaller ones, including mom-and-pop grocery stores. It has done church expansions in Rogers, Fayetteville and Bentonville, as well as small fitness centers, fuel stations and offices. The Dallas office has a particular expertise in restaurants.

Looking to the future, Benchmark Group is working with a Norwegian firm that is working on a heat recovery system for poultry houses. Kimball, in fact, recently attended an international poultry convention in Atlanta. The Norwegian company has already been successful working with the mining industry, Kimball said.

**Beck**

Beck to senior estimator and David Watkins to design-build manager.

Beck joined TOLM seven years ago after graduating from Arkansas Tech University. He

will oversee the estimating department, assist with preconstruction development, and assist with the conceptual estimating and constructability review for design-build services.

"Josh has earned this opportunity to lead and grow our preconstruction group," said Brian Rohlman, president of TOLM Group. "He has served our company in many roles over his tenure, including project management. I know he will continue to drive value to our clients during the critical preconstruction phase."

Beck has earned an associate of science in nuclear technology and a bachelor of science in mechanical engineering from Arkansas Tech and a master of business administration from the University of Central Arkansas. He and his family live in Springfield, Arkansas.

Watkins came to TOLM Group five years ago after working for a prominent Arkansas-based engineering firm. In this new role, he will lead TOLM's in-house

**Watkins**

design-build team by managing and overseeing projects executed via design-build delivery. He will be the face of the company for the client throughout the design-build process from con-

ception to the end of construction.

"David has been an important part of our design-build team and in its growth," said Greg Smith, vice president of TOLM Group. "This new position will allow him to continue growing the department in line with his vision and meeting the needs of our clients."

Watkins graduated from the University of Arkansas with a bachelor of science in landscape architecture and lives in Morrilton with his family.

Halff's Short is road safety professional

Halff's Van Short, P.E., has been certified as a road safety professional.

Short, a senior transportation leader based out of Halff's Little Rock office, passed the examination and is now cer-

**Short**

tified as a Road Safety Professional (Level 1). As an RSP1 he is recognized as one of a specialized group of professionals with the set of skills and expertise needed to successfully solve

problems, create solutions, and improve communities.

Transportation Team Leader James Barr, P.E., said, "We are proud of Van's accomplishment and are looking forward to incorporating his new certification and knowledge into projects across the state."

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GOVERNOR SIGNS LEARNS ACT. Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders is pictured signing the LEARNS Act in the State Capitol Rotunda March 8. The adults pictured with her are, from left, Arkansas Teacher of the Year for 2022 Jessica Saum of Cabot; Arkansas first gentleman Bryan Sanders; Secretary of Education Jacob Oliva; Rep. Keith Brooks, R-Little Rock, who sponsored the bill in the House; and Sen. Breanne Davis, R-Russellville, who was the Senate sponsor.

Session a LEARNS experience

Education reform package dominates; engineers will try to pass contract changes in two years

By Steve Brawner
Editor

Arkansas lawmakers in this year's legislative session changed the state's education system, voted to require criminal offenders to serve more of their sentences while authorizing money for more prison space, and cut income taxes. They also declined to enact contracting reforms sought by engineers.

Engineers were hoping Arkansas legislators would address three major construction contract provisions: "standard of care," "additional insured," and "duty to defend."

House Bill 1581 by Rep. Les Warren, R-Hot Springs, concerned the first two

of those provisions. Warren filed the bill March 8 and withdrew it March 29, when it was sent to interim study by the House Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee.

First, it would have limited construction contracts involving engineers and architects to a standard of care related to skill and expediency that is ordinarily provided by a competent professional. That provision would have addressed an issue where public and private contracts require engineers to perform their "best" or "fastest" work. That's a problem because engineers' professional liability insurance does not cover those kinds of terms. It simply covers an engineer's work, so if there's a claim both the engineering firm and the client may be harmed.

Second, the bill also contained a provision banning the practice of one party

in a construction contract demanding to be named as an additional insured entity on the other party's professional liability or workers' compensation policies. That's also a problem because a professional liability policy is meant for a particular profession, and as a rule engineers can't add other entities to their policies.

Robert Coon with Impact Management, the ACEC/A's lobbyist, said ACEC/A met with both public and private entities but faced considerable resistance.

"I think there were folks that understood what we were trying to do, and I think there were folks that didn't," Coon said. "And there were definitely some parties on the other side that just really didn't want us interfering in their contracts, which I respect that position, but ultimately, I don't think they recognized



REP. LESS WARREN, R-Hot Springs, sponsored legislation that would have enacted construction contract reforms. It has been sent to interim study for possible consideration in the 2025 legislation session.

that they were equally as harmed should one of these situations go poorly.”

Engineers will have more work to do on the “duty to defend” issue. That’s where, under state law, they can be required by contractors or public entities to sign a contract agreeing to defend their customer in the course of a lawsuit. It’s an upfront cost that is not covered by insurance because professional liability policies only cover the profession. It’s par-

ticularly unfair because if an engineering firm is not at fault, there is no mechanism to get its money back.

Coon said public and private entities pushed back against ACEC/A’s efforts because they did not want to lose their leverage in getting subcontractors to defend them. That issue was the most controversial of the three, so it was not part of Warren’s bill and is not part of the interim study.

“That one’s going to take a lot of groundwork,” he said. “The engineers are going to have to really do some broad education activities with members leading up to the next session if they want to tackle that one.”

Licensure bill fine after changes

Another engineering-related issue worked out well for engineers. Act 457 by Sen. Ricky Hill, R-Cabot, requires occupational licensing entities to grant licenses to individuals with out-of-state licenses who establish residence in Arkansas.

The provision only applies to individuals without a disqualifying criminal offense and who don’t have a pending complaint, allegation, or investigation. The legislation further allows occupational licensing entities to require applicants to pass a test relevant to state laws regulating the occupation.

Coon said the bill as originally written could have taken too much authority from state licensing entities. It did not require residence, which could have led to unintended consequences where individuals could be licensed in a state with lax standards and then do business in Arkansas. Hill listened to concerns and modified the bill. Coon said ACEC/A was comfortable that the final version addressed those concerns while also achieving its goals of licensing qualified individuals more expediently.

“In the end, I think it got to a place where we felt like it was much narrower, it served a noble purpose, and we felt like

Continues on page 18

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Josh joined HW in 2009 and became a partner in 2019. He is presently an Assistant Vice President responsible for managing the firm’s Fayetteville office. As a licensed Professional Engineer in Arkansas and Oklahoma, he has experience working on a wide range of water and wastewater projects including large diameter gravity sewers, wastewater lift stations, water pump stations, storage tanks, rural water systems, and both water and wastewater treatment plants. He has also worked with USDA Rural Development to secure funding for both water and wastewater projects in rural communities throughout Arkansas, and he particularly enjoys the opportunity to work with clients to collaboratively develop solutions on any issues they may be experiencing.

A native of Fayetteville, AR, Josh is a graduate of the University of Arkansas where he earned both his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in Civil Engineering. He is a hobbyist woodworker and machinist with a shop in his garage where he enjoys restoring furniture and machinery. He loves spending time with his wife, Sarah, and their 3-year-old son Isasac. He also enjoys helping Sarah out with her hobby farm raising sheep and goats.

Joshua S. Durham, P.E.
Assistant Vice President & Principal



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the possibility for abuse and trying to kind of get around Arkansas' licensing process was very minimal if not nonexistent," he said.

Coon said legislators overall are inclined to have a "freedom to operate" outlook. There will have to be a balance between providing opportunities while not compromising safety or work quality. No one wants unqualified people designing highways and bridges. Nevertheless, the engineering profession must guard against unintended consequences.

"They are typically not the target for those types of bills in a way, but oftentimes the way those bills come together, they end up being kind of innocent bystanders," he said of engineers. "So whether it's licensing or something like that, that's always going to be something that's important, to be able to demonstrate what engineers do, why we have to be cautious and thoughtful about laws that potentially affect the profession."



Coon

LEARNS Act, criminal justice

For the general public, the session was dominated by two major issues: the LEARNS Act and criminal justice reform.

The LEARNS Act was Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders' comprehensive education reform package and was her top priority coming into the session. At the State Capitol Rotunda March 8, she said, "I'm proud that the bill I'm about to sign is the largest overhaul of our state's education system in Arkansas history because it frankly could not get here soon enough. We've seen how the status quo condemns Arkansans to a lifetime of poverty, and we're tired of sitting at the bottom of national education rankings."

The law's most attention-getting elements were teacher salary increases and education freedom accounts.

The law increased state-mandated minimum teacher salaries from \$36,000

to \$50,000, with state funds used to cover the cost. All teachers in Arkansas will receive at least a \$2,000 raise. Teachers also will be eligible for up to \$10,000 from a Merit Teacher Incentive Fund program for demonstrating outstanding growth in student performance. The law also makes it easier for school districts to fire teachers by repealing the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act.

The LEARNS Act also created an Arkansas Children's Educational Freedom Account Program, a school choice plan allowing families to use public funds for private and homeschool expenses. Participating families will have access to up to 90% of the prior year's statewide per pupil foundation funding that would have gone to the public school where their child would have been enrolled. This school year, foundation funding was \$7,413 per pupil.

The program will begin enrolling students this upcoming school year and be fully implemented by 2025-26. A fiscal impact statement released by the Department of Education Feb. 21 found the bill will cost \$297.5 million its first year with \$150 million of that being new money. In year two, the cost will be \$343.3 million with \$250 million being new money. Of those, the biggest chunk will be the teacher salary increase, which is estimated to cost \$180 million each year.

The LEARNS Act also includes a provision whereby students who don't meet reading standards by grade three would not be promoted to fourth grade unless they have a good-cause exemption. They could only be held back once.

Also, students starting with the ninth grade class of 2024-25 will be able to earn a diploma through a career-ready pathway that will include academic courses and also career and technical studies aligned with high-wage, high-growth jobs in Arkansas. The pathways will be primarily designed for students seeking stackable credentials as they pursue degrees or certifications or immediately enter a career upon graduation. Students in grades 6-8 would be exposed to career awareness and exploration activities.

The LEARNS Act is not the only move by the Sanders administration related to workforce development. On Feb. 9, she issued an executive order naming former

Tyson executive Mike Rogers as the state's chief workforce officer, a new position. Rogers will advise the governor on workforce development and career education issues and will direct her workforce development policies and career education strategy. He also will chair the Governor's Workforce Cabinet, which was created by the same order and will be composed of the secretaries or their designees of the Departments of Commerce, Corrections, Education, Human Services, Labor and Licensing, and Veterans Affairs.

Sanders signed the order at the Saline County Career Technical Campus, which trains students and adults to use equipment used by local industries. Around the room were electrical, pneumatic and motor control equipment.

"Before today, plenty of different areas of state government played a role in workforce, but never met to coordinate frequently. We're going to change that," she said that day. "This order brings them together in the same room as the springboard for future programs that train workers, cut red tape, and lower taxes."

The LEARNS Act wasn't filed until Feb. 20, a month and a half after the session started. Sanders signed it into law March 8. It was so significant that the session had an unusually slow start while lawmakers waited for it to be filed.

"LEARNS was a couple of things," Coon said. "It was a massive overhaul, so that includes a lot of time, it includes a lot of focus, and everybody knew it was going to include a lot of money. So when you have people's time and energy and effort focused on something that's being developed behind the scenes, and you know it's going to cost a ton, everything else that requires even a moderate amount of time or focus or even money is on the back burner, and so the first few weeks of the session were very slow."

Criminal justice reform

The other major legislation passed by Arkansas lawmakers this session was Sanders' Safer, Stronger, Arkansas Legislative Package. It included the Protect Arkansas Act, which requires individuals convicted of certain crimes, including capital murder, murder in the first degree, rape, and child pornography possession, among others, to serve 100% of their sen-

tences. Persons convicted of a long list of other serious crimes will have to serve 85% of their sentences but could receive “earned release credits” allowing them to reduce all or part of the other 15%. Those crimes include, among others, second degree murder, manslaughter, first degree sexual assault, and performing an abortion in violation of state law. Criminals convicted of other crimes would be eligible to be released after serving 50% or 75% of their sentences if granted by the Post-Prison Transfer Board, which would take the place of the Arkansas Parole Board.

Not included in the bill, but part of the package, is a 3,000-bed prison projected to cost \$470 million to build. It will be needed to handle prisoners serving longer time behind bars and will reduce the number of state inmates currently being housed in county jails because there is no room in the state’s prisons.

Sanders’ other major priority, income tax cuts, did not come until the end of the

session after the LEARNS Act had been signed and the criminal justice system package was working its way through the process. She had said during her campaign for governor that she wants to phase out the income tax in a responsible manner. This legislative session took small steps in that direction by lawmakers voting to cut the state’s top individual rate from 4.9% to 4.7%, and to lower the top corporate income tax rate from 5.3% to 5.1%. The tax cuts were projected to have a fiscal impact of \$124 million on the state budget.

At the session’s end, lawmakers through the Revenue Stabilization Act passed a \$6.2 billion general revenue budget for fiscal year 2024 that represented a \$177.7 million increase over this year. First passed in 1945, the RSA is a law passed each legislative session that is designed to ensure Arkansas has a balanced budget.

Sanders was successful in passing her three major objectives – a historic over-

haul of the state’s education system, major criminal justice reforms, and income tax cuts. Coon said she was thoughtful about the issues where she became involved and led on the issues that reflected her priorities.

Governors often enjoy a honeymoon during their first session after being elected. Coon said legislators were especially sensitive to Sanders’ positions on policy issues because of her state and national profile. As former President Trump’s press secretary, she already was a national figure. She is the daughter of a former governor – in fact, the first daughter of a governor elected to be governor herself in American history. She was elected last November with 63% of the vote in a race that was never in doubt.

“She has a larger bully pulpit, I think, than previous governors have had,” Coon said. “I think everybody would acknowledge that, and so the level of influence is obviously further magnified because of that.”

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IIJA investing billions in Arkansas

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will benefit highways, broadband and other needs, ACEC/A members are told

Arkansas is receiving billions of dollars as a result of the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and it is taking steps to spend the money appropriately for highways, broadband and other needs.

That was one of the messages at an ACEC/A-sponsored update on the IIJA at the Arkansas Energy Office Jan. 26.

The event was led by Becky Keogh, state infrastructure coordinator for the Department of Finance and Administration and former secretary of energy and environment.

Her position was created to coordinate federal infrastructure investments and to support strategic projects. Keogh said Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders wanted to ensure federal dollars are maximized, that they support her and legislators' priorities, and that the spending complies with state and federal law.

Keogh said \$2.7 billion in IIJA money had been announced for Arkansas this year with \$1 billion already awarded. Most has gone to the Arkansas Department of Transportation. Another \$4-\$5 billion may follow over the next five years.

Projects have included \$200 million to the Corps of Engineers to improve Arkansas River navigation, \$13 million for upgrades to the Northwest Arkansas National Airport, \$32 million for a flood risk reduction project for Pine Buff, and \$24.6 million for Connect Conway for enhanced bike and pedestrian options.

Keogh said the IIJA allocates money through existing funding programs and created new programs. Some of the money is formula funded, and some will be awarded competitively. In some cases, states must provide federal matching dollars, while some programs will require additional investment by the private sector. Cities and counties can apply for vouchers for eligible projects. "Made in American, Buy America" is a requirement, although some waivers have been granted, including for water/wastewater projects because of supply chain issues.



BECKY KEOGH, state infrastructure coordinator, speaks at the ACEC/A event.

Glen Howie, state broadband director, said the state must think about broadband infrastructure holistically – not just about infrastructure but also access, affordability and digital literacy. He said that 575,000 Arkansans lack broadband access and another 274,000 individuals between ages 18 and 64 lack basic digital literacy skills.

IIJA will be providing \$1.22 billion to the state in competitive, formula-based grants through the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment program. The money will expand access to the 110,000 locations that lack it, but infrastructure costs will be only about half of that. With the extra money, the state can think creatively about how to truly make broadband an "enabler" in four key focus areas of health care, education, small business and agriculture.

ACEC: Tough climate in D.C.

Speaking to the meeting by phone was Matt Reiffer, ACEC's vice-president, infrastructure programs. Reiffer, the national council's primary lobbyist on federal transport issues, said the Arkansas congressional delegation has good seniority in several key positions. Rep. Bruce Westerman, a professional engineer, chairs the House Committee on Natural Resources; Rep. Rick Crawford is the second most senior Republican on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; and Sen. John Boozman serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee's Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Reiffer said the last Congress in 2021 and 2022 was "incredibly productive"

with IIJA, the Inflation Reduction Act with its emphasis on energy and resiliency, and the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) bill.

In contrast, with a divided Congress and with a presidential election year approaching, the prospects for major legislation these next two years are slim.

"It's basically, let's not default on the national debt, and let's keep the government open," he said.

The good news is that infrastructure has bipartisan support. ACEC will focus on two priorities. One is oversight of IIJA. The other is the Federal Aviation Administration's reauthorization. The previous authorization, passed in 2018, expires at the end of this fiscal year. ACEC will have a robust agenda regarding airport infrastructure. It will also look at rules and regulations with respect to emerging technology such as drones.

Outside of the infrastructure agenda, Reiffer said the 2017 Tax Cut and Jobs Act will require engineering firms and other companies to amortize research and development costs over five years rather than in the year they occurred. Bipartisan legislation has been introduced in both the House and Senate with support by a coalition of industries.

Workforce development will be the ACEC's other big initiative. A multifaceted approach is needed, including providing more opportunities for qualified overseas engineers to work in the United States. Passing immigration laws is politically challenging, but ACEC will be working with the Biden administration to enact administrative reforms. Finally, a public relations program is needed to inspire the next generation of engineers and to reach young people in underrepresented communities.

Other speakers included Brad McCaleb, P.E., division engineer with ARDOT's Transportation Planning & Policy Division; Tricia Treece, deputy associate director of the Arkansas Department of Energy & Environment's Office of Air Quality; and Casey Covington, P.E., Metroplan interim director.

The event was sponsored by Cadence Insurance, ACEC Business Trust, and ACEC Life & Health Trust.

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Olsson project wins Grand Conceptor

Fayetteville's Lower Ramble links city's cultural arts sites; bridges urban, natural spaces

A project where Olsson helped create a cultural arts corridor in Fayetteville won the Grand Conceptor Award at the Engineering Excellence Awards Gala Evening March 9, while a bridge replacement by Michael Baker International won the People's Choice Award.

Olsson won the gala's top award thanks to its work on The Lower Ramble, part of a corridor linking key cultural arts sites in Fayetteville.

Landscape architecture firm Nelson Byrd Woltz hired Olsson to provide surveying, civil, structural, geotechnical, environmental, and construction testing services.

The Lower Ramble creates a unique interplay of urban and natural spaces. It's highlighted by the development of a previously unusable sloped wooded area that had been overgrown with invasive species. It was converted into a nature attraction with a circular tree canopy structure,



CATEGORY I: SPECIAL PROJECTS, SMALL AND LARGE PROJECTS. The winner in both categories was Olsson. Olsson won in the Large Projects category for the Lower Ramble Cultural Corridor Project in Fayetteville and, in the Small Projects category, for the Gully Park Township Parking Lot for Fayetteville. Pictured are Chris Dougherty, P.E., Olsson; Peter Nierengarten, City of Fayetteville; and Erika Hall, Olsson. Top photo is the Lower Ramble. Photos at the awards banquet courtesy of Jennifer Thompson, McClelland Consulting Engineers.

trails, elevated walkways, overlooks, native landscaping, and seating and performance areas. Accessible paths lead down

to Tanglewood Branch Creek. The corridor also involved low-impact streetscape improvements including on-street park-

ing, bioretention basins, widened sidewalks and crosswalks.

The conceptual design was done in 2019, followed by design development in 2019 and 2020. The grand opening was last year.

Olsson's services met the city's goals of celebrating the local entertainment and arts district with improved access and enjoyable gathering spaces, while also preserving and enhancing the urban forest and watershed.

"The city had very high expectations on this project," said Chris Dougherty, P.E., Olsson project manager. "There was a lot of public involvement, a lot of interest. ... You see people walking here now. It's a pretty high traffic area."

The corridor is the first project in Arkansas to achieve SITES certification by the Sustainable Sites Initiative, which was a client-driven goal. SITES is similar to LEED certification, but it applies to landscape architecture without building construction. The project must keep detailed



A PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE at the Lower Ramble in Fayetteville.

records regarding design and material usage, going so far as to limit how long heavy equipment can be left running.

The Lower Ramble is half of The Ramble, a two-phase project connecting all the arts districts in Fayetteville. The coming Upper Ramble will start at the Fayetteville Public Library, where the Lower Ramble ends, and continue to the Walton Arts Center, where a parking lot will be demolished to create a civic plaza at the

corner of Dickson Street and West Avenue. Olsson will do the civil engineering for this second phase while also being the lead engineer for a new parking deck on the north side of Dickson.

"The Ramble" name came as a result of public input through the city's Speak Up Fayetteville public engagement portal.

Dougherty not only helped design the project but also benefits from it.

"It's a great place to come on a day like this," he said. "When I'm visiting the library with my family, we'll come down here and walk it. I brought my five-year-old down there, and he loved to play down in the creek, just like it was intended, so it's a neat place."

Dougherty said the work was satisfying.

"I like building on the community and helping the community grow and adding value to the community, and I feel like this project has added a lot of value to the community," he said.

Continues on next page

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The project also won the top award in **Category I: Special Projects, Large Project**. Honor Award recipients in that category were B & F Engineering, A Division of Crafton Tull, for the Lakeside Campus Improvements for the Lakeside School District; CEI Engineering Associates for the Centennial Park at Millsap Mountain project for the City of Fayetteville and the Walton Family Foundation/NWA Trailblazers; McClelland Consulting Engineers for the Gentry Sports Complex; and Garver for the FYV Runway & Lighting Rehabilitation project for the City of Fayetteville.

MBI wins People's Choice Award

Michael Baker International's Palarm Creek Bridge Replacement project for the Arkansas Department of Transportation won the People's Choice Award and also won in **Category C: Structural Systems**. When the aging Highway 365 bridge over Palarm Creek was deemed structurally deficient, ARDOT set into motion a fast-track plan to replace it with a replacement bridge and its approaches. ARDOT staff performed the roadway and hydraulic study and relied on Michael Baker to complete the bridge design and plans. Michael Baker's bridge design team coordinated directly with ARDOT's roadway design team to produce the complete set of construction drawings. Michael Baker took on the critical task of replacing the bridge and its approaches including the design of the superstructure, substructure, and foundation. The bridge was lengthened to more than 200 feet, and lanes and shoulders were widened. This provided a safer corridor and increased capacity, allowing for smoother traffic flow and reduced delays. The new structure needed to be horizontally curved in order to maintain traffic throughout the construction of the new bridge, adding complexity to the project.

Other winners honored at the Engineering Excellence Awards Gala were as follows.

Category A: Studies, Research and Consulting. The winner was PMI for the Eco-Vista Ammonia Stripping Study for Waste Management. Waste Management operates the Eco-Vista Landfill in Northwest Arkansas, and the landfill generates leachate that is discharged to the local



PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD. Michael Baker International's Palarm Creek Bridge Replacement project for the Arkansas Department of Transportation, top photo, won the People's Choice Award as selected by attendees of the Engineering Excellence Awards Gala Evening. It also won in Category C: Structural Systems. Pictured above are, from left, Kim Daggitt, P.E., Terracon; Sharath Ranganath, P.E., Jim Beatty, P.E., and Scott Thornsberry, P.E., Michael Baker; Rick Ellis, P.E., ARDOT; Chris Handley, P.E., Terracon; and Fred Harper, P.E., Dr. Hussam Saleem, P.E., S.E., and Amanda Furr, P.E., Michael Baker. Bottom right photo, Ellis, Saleem and Harper are joined by Ken Estes, right, of Cadence Insurance, which sponsored the People's Choice Award.

publicly owned treatment works. Biological pretreatment of leachate through nitrification had been used to remove nitrogen prior to discharge, but this process was no longer viable due to operational and cost considerations. To find a solution, PMI joined forces with Waste Management to perform bench scale and field pilot studies for the removal of total nitrogen through ammonia stripping. Results demonstrated that packed media towers would be a viable technology. This





CATEGORY A: STUDIES, RESEARCH, AND CONSULTING. The winner was PMI, above, for the Eco-Vista Ammonia Stripping Study. Pictured are Hope Brotherton, PMI; Carl Simmons and Dave Conrad, Waste Management; and Brad Wingfield, P.E., and Cole Glover, PMI.

process will allow landfill owners to discharge to public treatment works in nutrient management areas and maintain compliance with nutrient effluent limits.

PMI collaborated with local and national Waste Management staff on this project for two years. Its turnkey study streamlined the project.

HONOR AWARD. Crist Engineers, below, received the Honor Award in Category A: Studies, Research and Consulting for the Dissolved Air Flotation project for Paragould Light, Water, and Cable. Dr. Brian Wintle, P.E., BCEE, with Crist Engineers is pictured.



Honor Award recipients in that category were Crist Engineers for the Dissolved Air Flotation project for Paragould Light,

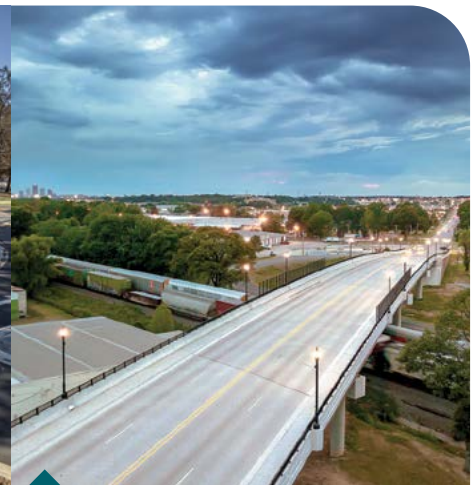
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Bull Shoals, AR
Bull Shoals Water Treatment Plant



Bull Shoals, AR
Mabelvale Pike Roundabout



North Little Rock, AR
McCain Bridge

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Water, and Cable; Garver for the Fort Smith Massard Wastewater Treatment Plant Study for the City of Fort Smith Utility Department; Hawkins-Weir Engineers for the Size Matters project for the City of Bentonville, and HNTB for the Arkansas EVID Plan for the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

Category B: Building/Technology Systems. The winner was Geotechnology for the Southland Casino Hotel Expansion for Delaware North. The Southland Casino Hotel Expansion had significant geological challenges, so Delaware North relied on Geotechnology's expertise to put the hotel on solid ground. The massive project included a 20-story hotel, two six-story parking garages, and an adjacent 113,000-square-foot gaming space. The main challenge involved a soil depth to bedrock at more than 3,000 feet, including a significant amount of soils consisting of Mississippi River alluvial deposits, with everything located within the New Madrid Seismic Zone. Through close collaboration with the owner and other design team members, Geotechnology provided geotechnical design and construction recommendations, including seismic engineering, deep-foundation recommendations, and ground improvements. The result is the tallest skyscraper in east Arkansas, made possible by Geotechnology and Delaware North.

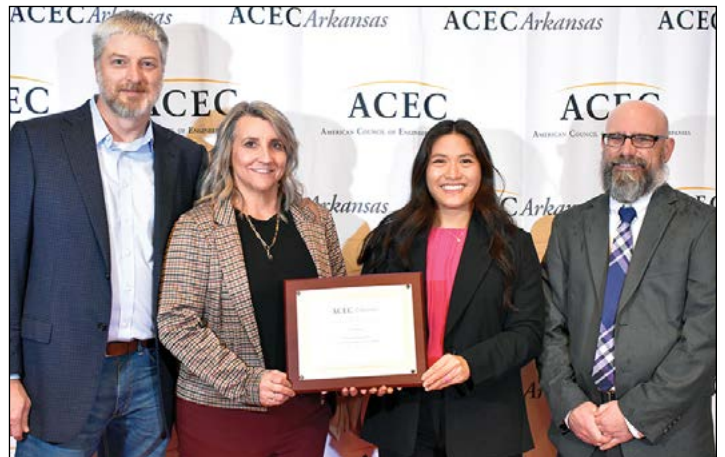
Category F: Water & Wastewater. The winner was Hawkins-Weir Engineers for the Adams Field Water Reclamation Facility Resiliency Upgrades for the Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority.



CATEGORY B: BUILDING/TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS. The winner was Geotechnology, LLC, left, for the Southland Casino Hotel Expansion. Pictured are Geotechnology's John Henson, P.G.; Dr. Ashraf Elsayed, P.E., D.GE, M.ASCE; Cary Porter, P.E., C.W.I.; and Duncan Adrian, P.E.



CATEGORY F: WATER & WASTEWATER. The winner was Hawkins-Weir Engineers for the Adams Field Water Reclamation Facility Resiliency Upgrades for the Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority. Pictured from left are Bently Green, P.E., Black & Veatch; Austin Anderson, P.E., and Aaron Benzing, P.E., Hawkins-Weir Engineers; Cary Beth Lipscomb, P.E., and Howell Anderson, P.E., Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority; Elizabeth Heiles, P.E., Hawkins-Weir Engineers; John Holloway, P.E., Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority; and Jim Fitzpatrick, P.E., Black & Veatch.



HONOR AWARDS. Burns & McDonnell, above left, received the Honor Award in Category F: Water & Wastewater, for the Siloam Springs Water Treatment Plant. Pictured are Steven Beam, P.E., Burns & McDonnell; Glenda Gorszczyk and Steve Gorszczyk, City of Siloam Springs; and Anthony Mravunac and Jake White, Burns & McDonnell. Above right, McClelland Consulting Engineers received the Honor Award in the same category for the West Fork Sewer Regionalization Project. Pictured from left are West Fork Mayor Heith Caudle; Kristie Drymon, city of West Fork; and McClelland Consulting Engineers' Arlena Tran, E.I., and Nick Batker, P.E., CFM.



HONOR AWARD. Garver, above, received the Honor Award in Category H: Transportation for the LIT Terminal Ramp Expansion. Pictured are Bryan Cole and Blake Johnston, E.I., Iconic Consulting Group; Mary Fair, P.E., Garver; Tom Clarke, P.E., C.M., Clinton National Airport; and Luke Stovall, P.E., then with Weaver Bailey and now with Emery Sapp & Sons.

ity. Hawkins-Weir Engineers' innovative treatment system resulted in a total peak flow capacity of 94 million gallons per day, setting a precedent for parallel auxiliary treatment at municipal wastewater treatment facilities nationwide. The centerpiece of the improvements was the addition of a dual-purpose auxiliary treatment system featuring pile-cloth disk filters. The work resulted in the largest-scale installation of this technology in the United States to date. This enhanced technology requires no chemicals and provides cost-effective treatment of wet weather peak flow. It limits high-peaking factors' impact on biological treatment processes, while also polishing normal dry-weather effluent and providing continuous protection for the facility's UV disinfection system. The project also included biological nutrient removal, a 94-MGD pump station, and an innovative baffle system. The spark for the approach was a court ruling that overturned a de facto EPA policy against blending as a method for mitigating peak wet-weather flows. The ruling enabled the Little Rock Reclamation Authority to change its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit and develop a better solution for the Adams Field upgrade.

Honor Award recipients in that category were as follows: Burns & McDonnell for the Siloam Springs Water Treatment Plant project; Garver for the Russellville City Corporation Water Treatment Plant Improvements; Half for the Gravel Ridge Sewer Improvement District #213 Improvements; McClelland Consulting

HONOR AWARD. McClelland Consulting Engineers, below, received the Honor Award in Category H: Transportation for the Texarkana Airport Taxiway Delta project. Pictured are Matthew Vinyard, P.E., McClelland Consulting Engineers; Paul Mehrlich, Texarkana Regional Airport; and Bailey Carr, E.I., and Mitch Rose, McClelland Consulting Engineers.



CATEGORY H: TRANSPORTATION. The winner was Garver for the Markham Street Jump Start Improvements for Metroplan. Pictured are, from left, Richard Corbyn, P.E., and Dustin Tackett, P.E., Garver; Kurt Jones, P.E., City of Conway; Joe Beck, Garver; Daniel Holland, Metroplan; Matt Mitchell, P.E., Garver; Casey Covington, P.E., AICP, Metroplan; and Todd Mueller, P.E., Garver.

Engineers for the Dardanelle Wastewater Treatment Project; and McClelland Consulting Engineers for the West Fork River Sewer Regionalization Project.

Category H: Transportation. The winner was Garver for the Markham Street Jump Start Improvements for Metroplan.

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HONOR AWARD. B&F Engineering, a Division of Crafton Tull, above, received the Honor Award in Category I: Special Projects, Large Projects, for its Lakeside Campus Improvements. Pictured are B & F Engineering's James Montgomery, P.S., and Daniel George, P.E.

HONOR AWARD. McClelland Consulting Engineers, below, received the Honor Award in Category I: Special Projects, Large Projects for the Gentry Sports Complex. Pictured are Justin Spafford, Flintco; and Chris Bakunas, PLA, ASLA, and Jonathan Snell, McClelland Consulting Engineers.



HONOR AWARD. Garver received the Honor Award in Category I: Special Projects for the FYV Runway & Lighting Rehabilitation project. Pictured are Kyle Bennett, P.E., and Mary Fair, P.E., Garver.

troplan. Funded by the Jump Start Initiative, Metroplan turned to Garver to help create a multimodal corridor located within a historical neighborhood. The goal of the project was to reconstruct Markham Street into a walkable connection between downtown Conway and Hendrix College, and to foster mixed-use development along the corridor. Garver provided traffic studies, environmental documentation, design, and construction inspection services. The design included incorporating low-impact development, pedestrian, bicycle, and streetscape features. Highlights included one-way cycle tracks, on-street parking, and bioretention planters. Throughout the entire project, Garver collaborated with Metroplan, the City of Conway, and the public to verify that design elements met funding requirements and expectations.

Receiving the Honor Award in Category H: Transportation were Crafton Tull for the Pleasant Grove Road Phase III project for the City of Rogers; Garver for the LIT Terminal Ramp Expansion for the Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport; and McClelland Consulting Engineers for the Texarkana Airport Taxiway Delta project.

Category I: Special Projects, Small Projects. The winner was Olsson, for the Gulley Park Township Parking Lot for the City of Fayetteville. Gulley Park is one of Fayetteville's most visited public spaces featuring trails, day-use areas, and community event space. With the number



CATEGORY J, SMALL PROJECTS. The winner was Crafton Tull, above, for the 12th Street Community Jump Start project for the City of Little Rock. Pictured from left are Dave Roberts, ASLA, Matt Crafton, P.E., and Brad Peterson, P.E. Crafton Tull; David Hopkins and Jon Honeywell, City of Little Rock; and Casey Covington and Daniel Holland, Metroplan.



HONOR AWARD. Michael Baker International received the Honor Award in Category J, Small Projects for the Runway 18-36 project for the Magnolia Municipal (Ralph C. Weiser Field) Airport. Pictured are Michael Baker's Scott Thornsberry, P.E., Matt Roddy, Leonard Speed, Jessica DeVon, and Amanda Furr, P.E.



HONOR AWARD. McClelland Consulting Engineers, above, received the Honor Award in Category J: Small Projects for the Benton Sevier Street project. Pictured are MCE's Byron Hicks, P.E.; John Richey, Benton Street Department; and MCE's Jeremy Waits, Austin Petty, and Maneesh Krishnan, P.E., M.ASCE.

of visitors growing every year, improvements to the Township Street parking area were identified by the city as vital to achieving its vision for the park's future. Olsson was tasked with designing an expansion that would double the existing parking and improve pedestrian safety buffers while mitigating the environmental impact of stormwater discharge. The primary challenge was collecting, detaining, treating, and subsequently releasing stormwater runoff from the expanded parking area into the adjacent creek, which flows into the West Fork of the White River. The solution included a large bioretention basin, which not only provides detention volume and stormwater treatment, but also acts as an interactive element of the park. With Olsson's help, the city was able to improve quality-of-life services by providing increased and safer access to the park, while continuing to protect the environment.

Category J: Small Projects. The winner was Crafton Tull for the 12th Street Community Jump Start project for Metroplan and the City of Little Rock. Crafton Tull played a significant role in a project to revitalize Little Rock's 12th Street Community. Although the area had received public investments, the community's walkability, pedestrian crossings, sidewalks, and overall access were still lacking. Metroplan recognized this need through the Imagine Central Arkansas plan, which listed 12th Street as an area deserving of investment. The plan was part of a \$1.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development designated to evaluate community infrastructure improvements. As a part of the plan's Jump Start Initiative, Crafton Tull designed upgrades for the 12th Street community. The project included new sidewalks, lighting, drainage improvements, and low impact development streetscaping. The project made the community more walkable, welcoming, sustainable, and safer. It helped create a crucial link between the 12th Street neighborhood to many employers and service providers located north of Interstate 630, while better equipping the community's infrastructure for further investment.

Honor Award recipients were Garver for the HOT Runway 5-23 RSA Improvements for the City of Hot Springs/Memorial

HONOR AWARD. Garver, below, received the Honor Award in Category J: Small Projects, for the HOT Runway 5-23 RSA Improvements. Pictured are Blake Johnston, E.I., Iconic Consulting Group; and Mary Fair, P.E., Garver.



Field Airport; McClelland Consulting Engineers for the Benton Sevier Street project; and Michael Baker International for the Runway 18-36 project for the Magnolia Municipal (Ralph C. Weiser Field) Airport.

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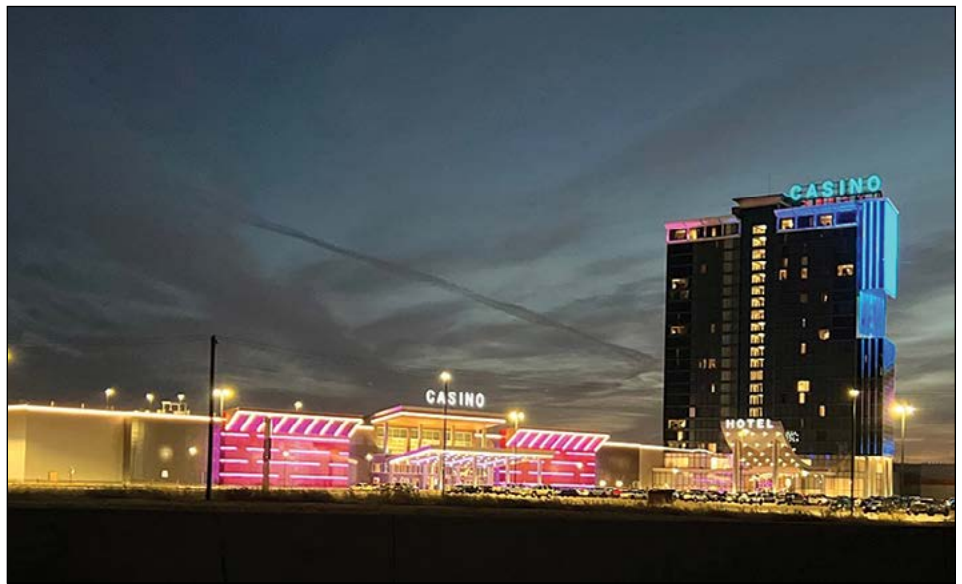


TWO GENERATIONS OF PRESIDENTS. ACEC/A President Jerry Holder, Jr., P.E., of Garver, left, poses with his father, Jerry Holder, who served as ACEC/A president 41 years ago, in front of a Gravel Ridge Sewer Improvement District project presentation by Halff. The elder Holder had worked on another project for that district years earlier.

A message from the national chair

Elsewhere in the program, Art Barrett, P.E., the national ACEC chair and a senior vice president at the Pennsylvania-based Gannett Fleming law firm, encouraged attendees to take advantage of the ACEC's Minuteman Fund, which is available for engagement in local political issues of national importance. Barrett also said each state should have at least one firm that is active in the ACEC's Technology Committee to inform others of changes that will affect the industry. He said the ACEC had separated energy from the Water, Energy and Environment Committee because energy needed to operate as a standalone concern.

Barrett said the ACEC's Infrastructure Works: Engineering and Public Works Roadshow had done a presentation before elected officials at the Port of Long Beach. The Roadshow is a public awareness effort showcasing projects that improve climate resiliency, deliver clean air and water, promote energy efficiency, and provide access to mobility. It is the result of a partnership between the ACEC, the



CATEGORY WINNERS. Top photo, PMI was the winner in Category A: Studies, Research and Consulting for the Eco-Vista Ammonia Stripping Study for Waste Management. Middle photo, Geotechnology won in Category B: Building/Technology Systems for the Southland Casino Hotel Expansion for Delaware North. Bottom photo, Hawkins-Weir Engineers won in Category F: Water & Wastewater for the Adams Field Water Reclamation Facility Resiliency Upgrades for the Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority.



MORE CATEGORY WINNERS. Top photo, Garver won in Category H: Transportation for the Markham Street Jump Start Improvements for Metroplan. Middle photo, Olsson won in Category I: Special Projects, Small Projects for the Gulley Park Township Parking Lot for the City of Fayetteville. Bottom photo, Category J: Small Projects. The winner was Crafton Tull for the 12th Street Community Jump Start project for Metroplan and the City of Little Rock.



ACEC NATIONAL CHAIR Art Barrett, P.E., speaks at the Gala.

American Public Works Association and the American Society of Civil Engineers. Barrett said the ACEC is developing a template for state groups to present their own shows to the public, legislators and high school students.

The ACEC/A's current president, Jerry Holder, Jr., P.E., of Garver recognized ACEC board members and past presidents. Those included his father, Jerry Holder, who was ACEC president 41 years ago.

Brad Hammond, P.E., of Olsson, recognized ACEC members of the College of Fellows, a national distinguished class of engineers selected by their peers. Arkansas' Fellows are: Dennis Ford, P.E., FACEC, FTN Associates; Jeff Geurian, P.E., FASCE, CEI Engineering Associates; Bert Parker, P.E., Garver; Rick Geraci, P.E., FACEC; and the late Carl Yates of McGoodwin, Williams and Yates, and Brock Johnson of Garver.

The event was at the Chenal Country Club rather than its usual site at the Governor's Mansion because of security changes being made there to accommodate the governor and her family.

Sponsors were ACEC Life/Health Trust, ACEC Business Insurance Trust, Olsson, Crafton Tull, McClelland Consulting Engineers, Geotechnology, Jack Tyler Engineering, Terracon, Garver, FTN Associates, nu marketing, and Cadence Insurance, which sponsored the People's Choice Award.



Beyond the design

As part of the Garver Enterprise Solutions Team, Drew Moffitt recognizes the numerous benefits of GIS services in enhancing critical infrastructure projects. In addition to aiding in community growth and prosperity, these services assist individuals in navigating their daily lives. Going beyond to find innovative new paths forward – Garver experts like Drew do it every day.

