

Building Arkansas

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



Watershed warriors

Engineering firms are fanning out across eastern and southern Arkansas to study drainage and flooding issues. The firms are working on 14 projects in partnership with the Arkansas Black Mayors Association using a \$96 million federal investment from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The firms have been engaged in extensive public outreach in order to alleviate these long-standing, quality-of-life problems. Iconic Consulting, which is owned by Keith Britton, P.E., left, is the prime consultant for three of the projects. Crafton Tull's Karen McCurdy, P.E., is the overall project manager.

Engineers worth celebrating for a night

The annual Engineering Excellence Awards Gala celebrates the engineering industry, and this year we have a lot to celebrate at the banquet March 7.

Federal funding is available for road, water, broadband and other types of projects with the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in 2021 and Inflation Reduction Act in 2022. More highway funding is available at the state level through the permanent half-cent sales tax approved by Arkansas voters in 2020. The money's not exactly unlimited, but we have more work than we can do.

A good example of engineers' work is this issue's cover story, the Arkansas Black Mayors Association watershed project. Thanks to a \$96 million federal investment, engineers are addressing longstanding flooding issues.

The result will be that homes and streets of often overlooked communities

won't be flooded any more. It's the kind of work engineers often don't brag about, which is why we have the Engineering Excellence Awards.

There are, of course, challenges to overcome these days. Chief among them is the lack of engineers available to do all this work. Having more work than people

isn't as big a problem as the opposite, but it's a problem nonetheless.

One potential solution is artificial intelligence. Over the past few decades, technology has made it easier for engineers to do their jobs. AI can do the same, but there are huge concerns in all walks of life – not just engineering – about job displacement, ethics, and ensuring humans remain the decision makers. The issue is such a big one that our ACEC/A and ASPE presidents both wrote about it in their columns this issue without being assigned the topic.

Based on past history, I'm confident engineers will address these challenges. Every time I drive on a highway or drink a glass of water, I'm enjoying the result of engineers solving problems. They will solve these also.

That's worth celebrating every year, at least for a night. See you March 7.



Angie W. Cooper
Executive Director

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Wes LeMonier began work at HW as a summer intern in 2012, joining full time after attaining his BSCE from the University of Arkansas in 2016. As a licensed Professional Engineer in the State of Arkansas, he has experience working on a wide range of projects including water distribution, wastewater collection, water pump stations, water storage tanks, stormwater drainage, sidewalks, and both water and wastewater treatment plants. Wes has developed hydraulic models and master planning documents for both municipalities and rural water utilities, and has also assisted in the procurement of project funding from various agencies. What he most enjoys about his work are the lasting relationships developed with HW clientele and within the HW family.

A native of Crawford County, Arkansas, Wes enjoys spending time with his wife, Madison, and their three children, Quade, Ty, and Blake. You can most likely find Wes and the family on the golf course, at t-ball games, or at the lake camping and fishing. They are active in their church and community, coach little league sports, and provide golf lessons in Mountainburg.

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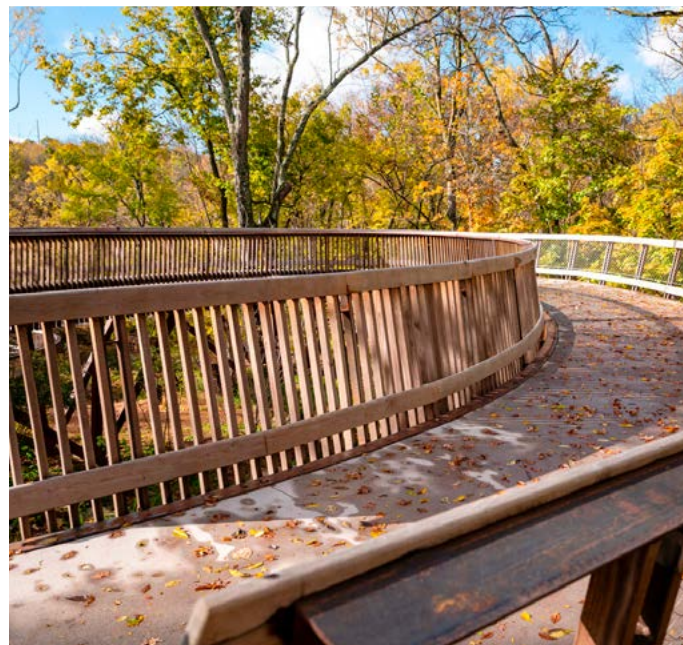
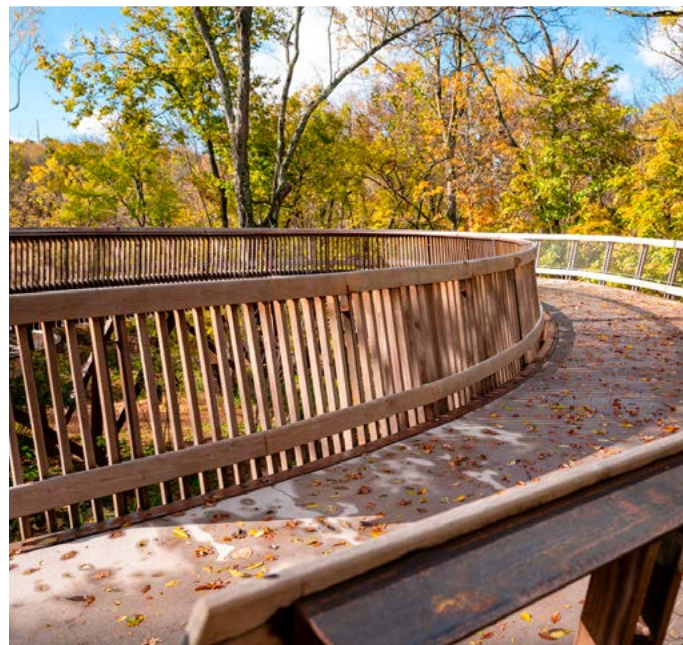
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18 Keith Britton, P.E., owner of Iconic Consulting Group, is one of the prime consultants on the Arkansas Black Mayors Association's watershed project, while Karen McCurdy, P.E., of Crafton Tull is project manager.

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18 [Cover / Engineers, mayors fight flooding](#)
ACEC/A member engineering firms are working with the Arkansas Black Mayors Association to solve persistent flooding and drainage issues in 14 often underserved areas.

The project is being funded with a \$95.9 million investment through the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program, which is operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

24 [Clark Contractors wins ACEC/A Trap Shoot](#)

The 2nd Annual ACEC/A Trap Shoot brought 17 teams and dozens of sharpshooters to the Jacksonville Shooting Sports Complex Nov. 1, but none of them were as sharp as Clark Contractors.

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26 [Member Spotlight / MCE turns 60, opens Rogers office](#)

McClelland Consulting Engineers turned 60 years old this year, and one way it's "celebrating" is by opening a new office in Rogers.

The office, which the firm plans to open in January, initially will house 4-5 employees but will have capacity for 10-12.

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Crafton Tull

What will AI mean for engineering?

It seems that the subject of artificial intelligence (AI) has flooded the media. It is part of discussions on education, business, politics, medicine, STEM, and even in our industry of engineering. Most of the discussion revolves around how useful it is, to what level are we comfortable with AI making decisions for us, and whether we will allow it to replace human thought processes.

The subject of AI was a popular topic at the ACEC Fall Conference in Austin, Texas, this past October. Linda Bauer Darr, the ACEC CEO, dedicated a portion of her opening remarks to the subject and its potential influence in our industry. Ms. Darr shared a story about not being familiar with the technology when some of her colleagues recommended she try it by writing a speech. She tried it, and within seconds she had a two-page speech in her voice on the subject she provided to the app. She also shared a story of an engineer who was interviewed by ACEC for a podcast who uses AI to write inspirational poems or thoughts to give to his children, and how he and his wife use AI to manage family schedules.

We all are familiar with AI as it is part of our daily lives (Siri, Google, Amazon's Alexa, etc.), and it is a powerful and useful tool. However, as more applications are being considered and implemented, what are the implications for our industry? For instance, one of the presentations at the ACEC Fall Conference discussed the benefits of using AI to manage project schedules, budgets, and man-hours. This is a useful tool that could help project managers that struggle with such tasks become more successful.

Conversely, will we allow AI to write contracts, specifications, and reports; make construction drawings; analyze data; and design things typically done



Paul Crawford, P.E., P.G.
ACEC/A President

by humans? Having AI perform some tasks that are typically done by lower-level staff may be appealing, particularly as we cope with completing large backlogs of work with a large workforce shortage. But what are the consequences of this?

As engineers, we must follow regulations, rules, and codes that govern

what we do. Will having AI perform some of these functions create an ethical dilemma? Some of us more senior engineers may be reminded of similar thoughts when computers were becoming more widely used to perform calculations that typically had been done by humans. I remember when I was a young entry-level engineer where a project manager told me and my contemporaries that we could not trust the results of a computer simulation and must check everything by hand just to make sure. We all thought that was a waste of time. When one colleague asked him how he was so sure that the hand calculations were correct, he responded that he would check our work to verify the result. As time went on, our industry became more comfortable with computers being part of our work, but ultimately, the certifying engineer still was and still is ethically responsible for reviewing and certifying the work.

AI is a powerful tool that can provide many benefits to our industry. But we must consider to what level it will be used. Will it take on duties typically performed by engineers, architects, and surveyors? If so, how do we prevent any unqualified individual from designing a building, a road, a water or wastewater treatment system? I strongly believe that discussing these issues is important before we accept AI with open arms into our industry.

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Navigating the AI landscape

The arrival of artificial intelligence (AI) into the world of engineering has ushered in a new era of possibilities, with the potential to affect nearly all aspects of our industry in some way or another. With AI being a foregone conclusion at this point, it is important to think about its advantages and challenges, shedding light on its transformative impact while acknowledging the potential drawbacks.



**Tyler Avery, P.E.
ASPE President**

AI has already begun to revolutionize design and simulation processes, offering a range of benefits. Generative design, an AI-powered approach, for example, enables the exploration of innovative solutions by analyzing extensive data sets, often revealing patterns beyond human perception. This results in designs that are not only efficient but also creatively optimized, pushing the boundaries of traditional engineering constraints. AI-driven simulations such as finite element analysis provide a virtual testing ground. This not only reduces the reliance on costly physical prototypes but also improves accuracy, predicting performance with unprecedented precision.

AI's capability to process vast amounts of data in real-time translates into optimized engineering processes. Machine learning algorithms analyze historical data, identifying patterns that inform decisions leading to increased efficiency and resource utilization. In manufacturing, for example, AI streamlines production lines, minimizes waste, and boosts overall productivity, contributing to sustainable and cost-effective practices.

The implementation of predictive maintenance strategies is a notable advantage of AI in engineering. By analyzing sensor data, machine learning models predict potential equipment failures, allowing for proactive maintenance interventions. This not only reduces downtime but also extends the lifespan of machinery, presenting substantial cost savings and enhancing operational reliability.

AI-based decision support systems offer a robust framework for informed decision-making in complex engineering projects. Analyzing vast data sets and considering various parameters, these systems enable engineers to make data-driven decisions, minimizing risks and optimizing project outcomes. This results in a more streamlined and effective decision-making process.

Despite the numerous benefits, the integration of AI in engineering is not without challenges. Job displacement remains a top concern, as the increased automation may impact certain roles within the engineering workforce. It seems the best thing engineers can do prepare for AI is to become familiar with its capabilities and work towards an environment that ensures collaboration that harnesses its benefits while still maintaining professional and ethical boundaries.

Ethical considerations surrounding data privacy, algorithmic bias, and responsible AI use must be addressed. Striking a balance between innovation and ethical concerns is crucial to avoid unintended consequences and ensure the responsible development and deployment of AI technologies in engineering.

The integration of AI in engineering brings forth a multitude of advantages, from innovative design possibilities to enhanced efficiency and predictive maintenance. However, the field must grapple with the challenges of job displacement and ethical considerations. This requires a delicate balance between technological innovation and responsible use.

As engineers navigate this landscape, it is clear that AI holds immense potential to reshape the future of engineering, offering unprecedented efficiency, sustainability, and innovation, while also necessitating careful consideration of the associated risks and responsibilities. What an exciting time to be in engineering!

— In the News —



Garver named by Zweig as top firm to work for

Garver has been named the #1 Best Firm to Work For by the Zweig Group for the third consecutive year. It's the 10th consecutive year that the firm has ranked in the top three.

The list ranks the nation's outstanding workplaces in the architectural-engineering-construction industry throughout the United States and Canada. It is compiled based on statistics and employee opinion on firm culture, workplace practice, employee benefits, employee retention rates, professional development, and more.



Hoskins

"At Garver, we strive to offer our employees the best employee experience – from health benefits to professional development to our annual Summit," said President and CEO Brock Hoskins, P.E. "We



March 7
Engineering Excellence Awards Gala
Chenal Country Club
Little Rock

May 13-16
ACEC Annual Convention
Grant Hyatt
Washington, D.C.

love hearing that our people feel valued and cared for, and how much they enjoy connecting with one another across our footprint."

Garver has experienced exponential growth in the past year, leading to new offices and new markets in the Alabama Gulf Coast region, in western Colorado, and elsewhere. It now has more than 1,000 full-time employees. The employee benefits package offers 401(k) matching, paid parental leave, health care coverage with dental benefits, HSA funding, and other health care savings. Garver employees also benefit from an in-house wellness team and on-site fitness centers, reimbursement for gym fees and other health-related services, a flexible work schedule, and leadership dedicated to providing professional development resources.



Garver employees converge at 10th Garver Summit

Garver hosted its 10th annual Garver Summit in Grapevine, Texas, at the Gaylord Texan.

The Summit brings together offices across the firm's 18-state, 49-office footprint. It has grown from a quarterly breakfast to an annual meeting and now an annual themed event that includes a firm-wide expo and awards show. All Garver full-time employees are invited.

This Summit began with a dinner honoring employees who had been nominated for a Garvy or Spirit of Garver award. Employees enjoyed dinner at the Glass Cactus, a lakefront nightclub on the Gaylord property, and then played a round of putt-putt golf as part of the Masters golf tournament-themed evening.

The following day included a firm-wide expo. Teams from Garver's business lines, office support groups, and Office of the Year (OOTY) nominees filled 26,921 square feet with interactive games and creative displays. Highlights included a giant Hungry Hippos inflatable hosted by the downtown Dallas office; a voluntary employee head shaving to raise money for Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired hosted by the Georgetown/Austin office; a cart race hosted by Garver Transportation; a velcro ax throw hosted by the legal team; and a Barbie-themed human resources booth.

That evening, Garver employees dressed as musical icons and attended the Garvy awards at the Toyota Music Factory. Leadership kicked off the MTV-inspired show, with Garver President and CEO Brock Hoskins, P.E., and COO Michael Graves appearing as country music

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In the News (Cont'd)

greats Brooks & Dunn. Individuals and teams were recognized, and Hoskins and Graves shared information about the firm's performance and future goals.

The next morning, employees participated in either a Texas two-mile fun run around the Gaylord, a yoga session on a balcony overlooking Grapevine Lake at the Glass Cactus, or a GarverGives and Texas Music Project-sponsored concert. The concert featuring young musical artists was recorded so that it could be streamed directly to hospitalized children across the state.

This year, Garver again celebrated being named the Zweig Group #1 Best Firm to Work For. Garver also broke into the top 100 of ENR's Top 500 Design Firms list, coming in at #96. And the Garver footprint continued to expand, with new offices opening in Florida, Alabama, Texas, and Colorado.

Garver's Dickey on Ark Biz list of '20 in Their Twenties'



Dickey

Garver Water Process Engineer Kristen Dickey, E.I., has been recognized as an Arkansas Business "20 in Their Twenties" honoree. Dickey joins her peers from across the state whom the magazine considers to be rising stars in their respective industries.

Dickey spent her childhood kayaking and boating while growing up in central Arkansas. She learned from those experiences how clean water affects the health of ecosystems and communities, and she's carried that passion into her career.

As a water process engineer, Dickey has played a role in major water infrastructure projects throughout the state, including the wastewater infrastructure master plans for Springdale and Fayetteville and the engineering design for the Northwest Arkansas Conservation Authority's wastewater treatment plant.

A leader in GarverGives, the firm's corporate giving program, Dickey spearheads volunteer opportunities within the Northwest Arkansas area, including volunteering at the Ozark Natural Science Center and working with the Miracle League to organize baseball games for children with disabilities.

As a member of the Arkansas Water Young Professionals group, she volunteers at water conferences across the state. She serves on the Garver Launch Steering Committee, which works to ensure a positive intern experience for Garver's 100-plus interns.

Hall to lead Olsson's Water Market group from NWA office

Chris Hall, P.E., an Olsson senior vice president working in the firm's Fayetteville office, has been named Olsson's Water Market leader. In that position, Hall is responsible for leading and developing Olsson's partnerships with national and multi-state water, wastewater and water resources clients.

"Chris brings a depth of technical expertise, and I'm excited for him to start as Olsson's Water Market leader," said Sarah Foster, Olsson's executive vice president of markets. "I'm looking forward to watching him build partnerships and strategically grow our water market."

Hall is a certified professional engineer in four states with more than two decades of experience. He previously led Olsson teams specializing in water and wastewater engineering. He received his bachelor's in civil engineering from the University of Arkansas.

Olsson restructured its senior leadership group so that it now includes leaders for Olsson's disciplines, markets and geographies. It also includes senior directors for both IT and operations.



Hall

Olsson's Jared Rasmussen to lead Arkansas region

Jared Rasmussen, P.E., has been named Olsson's East Central geography leader and will lead the company's growth strategy across Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Illinois.



Rasmussen

Based in Springfield, he will serve as a senior vice president and oversee a geographic area that includes nine Olsson offices and several hundred employees.

"Jared is an outstanding leader who is well respected by both clients and colleagues," said Olsson Chief Operating Officer Ron Mersch. "I can't wait to watch him succeed in this new role leading our East Central region."

Rasmussen has been at Olsson for nearly two decades and has extensive experience leading offices, teams and projects for a variety of the firm's public and private clients. He received his bachelor's in civil engineering from the University of Missouri-Columbia.



Smith



Carr

MCE projects, engineers win ASCE awards

Two MCE projects were named Projects of the Year at the American Society of Civil Engineers Annual Conference in Jacksonville, while MCE engineers re-

ceived the Engineer of the Year and the Young Engineer of the Year awards.

MCE's Lyle Park project in Benton won the Small Project of the Year award. The Texarkana Regional Airport Taxiway Delta won the Large Project of the Year award.

Alex Smith, P.E., principal with the company, was the Engineer of the Year. Smith is an aviation project manager in the Little Rock office.

Bailey Carr, P.E., won the Young Engineer of the Year award. She works out of MCE's Fayetteville office as an aviation project engineer.

MCE adds staff in Fayetteville, Fort Smith offices

MCE's Fayetteville office has added three employees, while the Fort Smith office has added one.



DeLong

he is excited for this new opportunity to focus on private land development. He has a passion for hydraulics and hydrology analysis and wants to continue to develop those skills.

Emily Booth recently joined MCE's Fayetteville office as a project designer in the Land Development Department. Booth earned a bach-

Peter DeLong, P.E., joined the office as a land development project engineer. DeLong is approaching seven years of experience, primarily in the design of roadways and associated storm sewer systems, and

elor's degree in landscape architecture from the University of Arkansas. Her professional interests that drove her to pursue this degree are sustainability and designing with people's mental and physical health in mind.

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In the News (Cont'd)

Spencer Briggs is a 2023 biological engineering graduate of the University of Arkansas. He works in MCE's Water/Wastewater Department in the Fayetteville office. He has been with the company for three months. He is from Aurora, a small town in southwest Missouri, and spends his spare time enjoying the outdoors, exercising, and rock climbing.

MCE's Fort Smith office has added Ben Frederick as a project designer. Frederick graduated from the University of Arkansas with a degree in chemical engineering. He has served two internships, one as a chemical engineer intern and one as a civil engineer intern.

MCE opens new office in Rogers

MCE was opening a new office location in Rogers in mid-December. It is intended to be an extension of the firm's Fayetteville office to help the firm better serve clients and employees in Benton



Rutledge



Taylor

Three Halff pros gain certifications

Three Halff design professionals in the firm's Arkansas offices recently earned certifications.

Spencer Taylor, P.E., a graduate civil engineer at Halff's Bentonville office, recently earned his professional engineer certification. With expertise in municipal and private sector projects focusing on hydrology and hydraulics, Taylor is well-versed in industry-standard tools and has contributed to various projects, including drainage plans, riverine modeling, and infrastructure modeling.

Katie (Bryan) Rutledge achieved the status of registered professional engineer in Texas in August and Arkansas in September. Rutledge earned her bachelor of science in civil engineering, alongside a bachelor of arts in German, from the University of Rhode Island in 2019. Since her graduation, she has been an integral part of the Transportation Team in Halff's



Aleman

Little Rock office.

Marcos Aleman, who works in the Little Rock office, successfully passed the Landscape Architecture Registration Exam (LARE).



Halff landscape planners cheer opening of plaza

Halff's Sally Horsey, Brian Vazquez, Lewis Jordan, and Marcos Aleman, all of the firm's Little Rock office, recently attended the dedication of the John H. Johnson Commemorative Plaza at Delta Heritage Trail State Park in Arkansas City.

Halff's planning and landscape architecture (PLA) team helped design the plaza for the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism.

The park, located on the Mississippi River riverbank within the Delta Heritage Trail State Park, is the southernmost point of the 84.5-mile Delta Heritage Trail.

John H. Johnson was the founder of the Johnson Publishing Company, which became the world's largest Black-owned publishing company with influential publications such as Ebony and Jet maga-

zines. He was born in Arkansas City in 1918. John H. Johnson Day is celebrated every year on Nov. 1.

The plaza features an indoor pavilion, picnic tables, and large displays of each magazine, offering a glimpse into Johnson's career and impact.

The PLA team at Halff, in collaboration with Arkansas State Parks and the Walton Family Foundation, played a pivotal role in designing the plaza. Features include ADA accessibility, a new parking area for 25 cars, thoughtful site drainage, and well-planned lighting. A dry creek with a pedestrian bridge, a slab for a future stage, picnic tables, and a landscape design showcasing Arkansas native trees, shrubs, and perennials stand out against the flat Delta landscape. An approximately 400 linear-foot educational trail loop was created to provide insights into Johnson's remarkable life and contributions.



Halff helps with back-to-school event at ballpark

The Bentonville Halff office in August lent its support to the Samaritan Community Center's back-to-school event at the Arvest Ball Park.

The employees sponsored various activities aimed at making a positive impact on the community. At the Halff booth, children constructed catapults using simple school supplies such as pencils, binder clips, and rubber bands. In addition to these engaging activities, the team collected and donated colored pencils for the backpacks distributed during the event. About 4,000 children and families participated.



Caster



Ryan

Michael Baker hires two in Bentonville office

Michael Baker International has recently hired two staff members in its Bentonville office.

Alan Caster, E.I., has joined the firm as a transportation designer. Caster has five years of engineering design experience including roadway, drainage, land development, trail, and municipal transportation improvements. He has more than

10 years of survey experience prior to obtaining his engineering degree in 2018.

Michael Baker International has hired Julia Ryan, AICP, as a senior regional planner in its Bentonville office. Ryan recently relocated to Northwest Arkansas from north Texas, where she most recently served for two years as the chief planning officer and director of planning & urban design for the city of Dallas. She served the previous 14 years as a senior planner and transportation manager for the city of Fort Worth. She will be primarily focused on municipal and transportation planning in Arkansas and Texas.

Michael Baker's Baker is selected as Midas Expert

Ethan Baker, P.E., S.E., recently was selected as a Midas Expert based on his

extensive use and expertise in Midas structural design software to complete seismic analysis, load rating, and structural analysis.

The Midas Expert Network is a networking platform that provides opportunities for engineers to connect and learn from an exclusive group of Expert Engineers through events and resources.

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In the News (Cont'd)



Baker

Midas Expert Engineers are considered top in their field and highly skilled.

Baker is a licensed professional engineer in Arkansas and California and a certified structural engineer in Illinois. He has a bachelor of science in civil engineering from the University of Mississippi and a master of science in civil engineering from the University of Arkansas. He has worked extensively in the design and load rating of rail, highway, and pedestrian structures.



TOLM group helps AGFC modernize fish hatchery

The TOLM Group is working with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission to modernize the Joe Hogan State Fish Hatchery in Lonoke. The \$12.6 million project is expected to be completed by the end of 2024.

Established in 1928, the hatchery is the oldest and most extensive among the four warm-water hatcheries owned by the AGFC, and it is one of the oldest and largest state-owned warm-water pond hatcheries in the United States. It is named for Joe Hogan, Arkansas' first fisheries supervisor, who served from 1928 to 1960.

The hatchery annually produces 3-4 million fish for stocking Arkansas' public lakes and streams. It also supplies fingerling fish to AGFC's other warm-water hatcheries. Its primary focus is warm-water species, including largemouth bass,



BENCHMARK GROUP staff members attended two events this fall. Top photo, Steve Gillespie, program manager, left, and Matt Nichols, P.E., LEED AP, engineering program director, attended the 2023 AIA Arkansas State Convention in Hot Springs Oct. 18-20. Tracy Meeks, project manager, also attended. Bottom photo, Steve Damer, CEM, CBCP, program manager, left, and Joey Roper, project manager, attended FMI - The Food Industry Association Energy & Store Development Conference in Baltimore Oct. 2-4.

bluegill, redear sunfish, crappie, channel catfish and blue catfish.

This will be the third and final phase of renovation work that has been ongoing at Joe Hogan since 2014. The staff there have been rebuilding ponds, repairing the aging infrastructure and dividing ponds into smaller, more manageable units. Seventy-seven ponds are now in use, all with independent drain lines, electrical service for aeration purposes and independent water fill lines.

This final renovation phase is a two-part project that will include a new indoor production facility and a water re-use system for the hatchery ponds. The indoor facility will increase both pro-

duction and efficiency for several species being cultured there, like Florida largemouth bass and channel catfish.

The Joe Hogan Hatchery is solely dependent on groundwater as its water supply, and this project is aimed at reducing that dependency. A water re-use system is being constructed that will capture water from ponds as they are drained and store it in a reservoir that can be filtered and pumped to other ponds anywhere on the hatchery.

Sichmeller joins Horner & Shifrin's transportation team



Sichmeller

Stephen Sichmeller, P.E., has joined Horner & Shifrin as assistant regional manager responsible for leading transportation efforts in Arkansas.

Sichmeller has more than 12 years of experience in transportation engineering design, with an emphasis on roadway infrastructure. He has spent the last 12 years at Arkansas Department of Transportation (ArDOT), most recently as assistant division head of roadway design for Northwest Arkansas.

Sichmeller is a professional engineer registered in Arkansas. He earned a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from the University of Arkansas. He currently serves as president of the Institute of Transportation Engineers Arkansas Section. In 2022, he was recognized with the ArDOT Director's Diamond Award for Outstanding Public Service. He has broad experience in the supervision, planning, design and construction of highways including evaluation of design activities, review of construction plans and permit applications, and coordination of design projects.

"Horner & Shifrin welcomes Stephen to our Transportation team," said Jarrett Jasper, senior vice president, business unit leader – transportation. "Stephen's first-hand knowledge of roadway de-

sign, specifically in the Arkansas region, strengthens our team's ability to deliver high-quality designs to our partners throughout the region. His expertise and experience will help H&S grow our operations in Northwest Arkansas and beyond."



Criswell

Shrestha

FTN's Shrestha, Criswell earn PE licenses

Two engineers with FTN Associates have earned their professional engineer licenses, bringing the firm's total number of PEs to 19.

Alen Shrestha, P.E., a water resources engineer, has earned his license in Arkansas after completing all requirements set forth by the Arkansas State Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Professional Surveyors.

In the News continues on page 16

Gallagher announces agreement to purchase Cadence Insurance

Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. announced Oct. 23 that it has agreed to acquire Cadence Insurance, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Cadence Bank. The transaction is subject to regulatory approval and was expected to close during the fourth quarter of 2023.

Under the agreement, Gallagher will acquire the stock of Cadence Insurance for \$749 million. Integration costs and expected non-cash management retention costs are expected to total \$70 million over the next three years.

Cadence Insurance offers commercial property/casualty, employee benefits and personal lines products to clients from 34 offices spanning nine states across the Southeast, including Arkansas. Ken Estes is the senior vice president and risk consultant in the Little Rock office.

The acquisition is expected to expand Gallagher's property/casualty and employee benefits presence across several states in the Southeast and broaden its capabilities across multiple niche practice groups.

Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. is a global insurance brokerage, risk management and consulting services firm headquartered in Rolling Meadows, Illinois. It

provides these services in approximately 130 countries through its owned operations and a network of correspondent brokers and consultants.

The Cadence Insurance team led by Markham McKnight and Chris Boone will operate under the direction of Bumpy Triche, head of Gallagher's Mid-South retail property/casualty brokerage operations, and Robby White, head of Gallagher's South-Central region employee benefits consulting and brokerage operations.

As part of the transaction, Gallagher will become the preferred insurance broking partner of Cadence Bank.

"Cadence Insurance is a fast-growing agency with strong niche capabilities across construction, real estate, manufacturing, healthcare and professional services. With a similar culture, a high-performing team and a significant Southeastern presence, there are immense long-term growth opportunities as part of Gallagher," said J. Patrick Gallagher Jr., chairman, president and CEO. "I look forward to welcoming Markham, Chris and the nearly 800 Cadence Insurance colleagues to our growing Gallagher family of professionals."



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Shrestha started working at FTN in August 2020. He earned a bachelor of science in civil engineering from IOE Pulchowk Campus, Tribhuvan University as well as a master of science in civil engineering from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

Outside of work, Shrestha enjoys hiking, playing guitar, soccer, and video games.

Water Resources Engineer Kelsey Criswell, P.E., also has earned her professional engineer license.

Criswell joined FTN's Fayetteville office in June 2020. She earned a bachelor of science in biosystems and agricultural engineering from Oklahoma State University as well as a master of engineering in civil and environmental engineering from Colorado State University. During her time with FTN, she has worked on various water resources and water quality projects such as floodplain modeling and watershed management plan development.

Outside of work, she enjoys biking, traveling, and creating fun with her family.



ANNA STAMPS, P.E., CFM, of CEI Engineering, right, was named Outstanding Floodplain Manager at the Arkansas Floodplain Management Association Fall Conference. Pictured with her is AFMA Chair Natalie Rogers, P.E., CFM, of Half.

CEI's Stamps is top floodplain manager at conference

CEI Engineering's Anna Keogh Stamps, P.E., CFM, won the Outstanding Floodplain Manager Award at this year's Arkansas Floodplain Management Association Fall Conference.

Smart was nominated for overall excellence. She assisted Centerton with its Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Rating System program to get to a Class 7 during the 2023 five-year review cycle. She assists Centerton with reviewing floodplain development permit applications and with determining what information needs to be provided in order to stay in compliance with flood regulations. She also assists the city with updating flood permit forms and tracking all flood permit activities.

The primary goal of the CRS program is to reward a community for having a strong floodplain management program. It is purely voluntary. A city can lower its residents' insurance costs by excelling in how the floodplain is regulated, processing requests regarding developing in a floodplain, and managing both historical and current information.

CEI Engineering has been the contract engineer for Centerton for more than 20 years. When Centerton decided to pursue joining the CRS program, it asked CEI to help with the program as well as develop the information needed to participate.



Crafton Tull marks 60th anniversary by volunteering

Crafton Tull celebrated its 60-year anniversary on Nov. 20. Each of the firm's 10 office locations participated in company-sponsored volunteer events to give back and help recognize the important milestone.

Crafton Tull was founded by Bob Crafton and Lem Tull in Rogers in 1963 and became a 100% employee-owned company in 2019. The firm has 300 employees and operates from offices throughout Arkansas and Oklahoma.

Crafton Tull offers architecture, civil engineering, environmental, landscape

architecture, planning, structural engineering, and surveying.

Rupe, environmental project manager, joins Crafton Tull



Rupe

David Rupe has joined Crafton Tull as an environmental project manager.

Rupe joins the Crafton Tull environmental team in a leadership role helping oversee the firm's

permitting and compliance processes. He specializes in Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 along with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

Rupe brings with him more than 20 years of environmental experience, most recently as a regulatory project manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Little Rock District, working from the Rogers regulatory field office. He was previously an ecologist and project manager at FTN Associates in Fayetteville.



GRAND CONCEPTOR. Olsson's design of Fayetteville's Lower Ramble cultural arts corridor won the Grand Conceptor Award last year. Pictured are Chris Dougherty, P.E., project manager, and Erika Hall.

Tickets go on sale for annual EEA gala in January

Tickets will go on sale in late January for the ACEC/A's biggest event of the

year, the Engineering Excellence Awards Gala. The annual event celebrating the engineering industry will be March 7 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Chenal Country Club in Little Rock.

Winners in the various categories also will be announced in late January, while the two biggest awards, as always, will be announced at the Gala event.

Those awards include the top award, the Grand Conceptor Award, which is chosen by a committee that reviews the submissions of all the award winners to select the most outstanding project. The other top award is the People's Choice Award, which is selected by Gala attendees. It is sponsored by Cadence Insurance.

Firms can submit entries in 12 project categories. Those are Category A: Studies, Research, and Consulting Engineering Services; Category B: Building/Technology Systems; Category C: Structural Systems; Category D: Surveying and Mapping Technology; Category E:



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 last year.

Environmental; Category F: Water and Wastewater; Category G: Water Resources; Category H: Transportation; Category I: Special Projects; Category J: Small Projects; Category K: Energy; and Category L: Industrial and Manufacturing Processes and Facilities.

Two awards are given in all the categories except Studies, Research, and Consulting: one for large projects with con-

struction costs greater than or equal to \$500,000, and one for small projects with construction costs less than \$500,000. Project entries must be designed by engineers located in Arkansas.

All submitted projects are rated on the basis of uniqueness and originality; future value to the engineering profession; social, economic, and sustainable development considerations; complexity; and successful fulfillment of the client/owner's needs, including schedule and budget.

The public relations and marketing value of participation in the state Engineering Excellence Awards program is considerable. All state winners are highlighted in Building Arkansas magazine. Each entry is recognized at the awards banquet. The ACEC/A staff contacts the local media to announce winners and their awards.

Winners are also published on the ACEC/A website at www.ArkansasEngineers.org.

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Perseverance, dependability and a strong foundation are Aaron Boehmler's personal and professional values. His passion is not just about elevating Arkansas' public infrastructure but seeking safety and quality time with his children.

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MICHAEL BAKER INTERNATIONAL'S MUHAJID CHANDOO, P.E., right, talks with a resident of the Camden area about flooding issues associated with that watershed. Chandoo told the group that the overall watershed that flows into the Camden area is 5,000 square miles, the size of Kentucky, but his project will focus on about 300 square miles.



Engineers, mayors fight flooding

Engineering firms and the Arkansas Black Mayors Association are using a federal program historically designed for agricultural and rural projects to address longstanding issues in 14 areas, including cities such as Pine Bluff and Camden.

By Steve Brawner
Editor

ACEC/A member engineering firms are working with the Arkansas Black Mayors Association to solve persistent flooding and drainage issues in 14 often underserved areas.

The project is being funded with a \$95.9 million investment through the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program, which is operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The funding is designed to reduce the impacts of floods, droughts, landslides, and erosion. It targets 14 project areas stretching across southern and eastern Arkansas on an arc with Turrell as the most northeastern project and Lewisville and Stamps at the southwest end. Selections were based on environmental risk, history of flooding, community need and potential impact.

Five projects are funded for planning, design, and construction phases. Five are funded for planning and design. Each of the 14 projects is currently in the planning phase, and it's not yet known what the design and construction phases will entail.

The \$95.9 million investment for Arkansas is part of a larger \$420 million investment in 132 infrastructure projects in 31 states. Arkansas' funding was announced by NRCS Chief Terry Cosby in Forrest City on April 21, 2022.

The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (PL-566) authorizes NRCS to help local organizations and governmental units implement projects in watersheds that are less than 400 square miles.

The program was historically used for agricultural and rural projects but was dormant for several years until it was recently reinvigorated through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021. The current implementation approach differs from how the program has operated in the past. Traditionally, PL-566 programs have concerned broader scale modeling, but this is more targeted to localized drainage issues.

Crafton Tull was hired as project manager by the Arkansas Black Mayors Association (ABMA).

The firm is conducting administrative tasks such as scheduling, timing and serving as a liaison between the ABMA, NRCS, and the design firms subcontracted to prepare the watershed plans. Karen McCurdy, P.E., Crafton Tull Environmental Division director, is project manager.

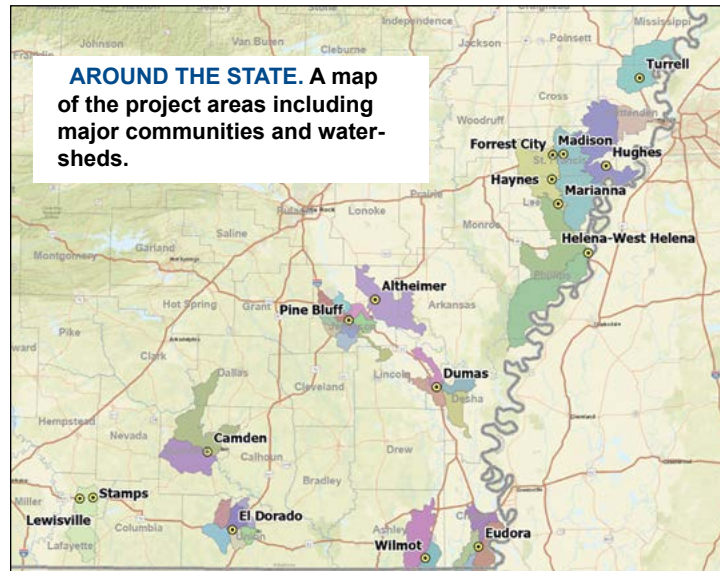
The ABMA selected seven firms to prepare the six watershed management plans: Pittsburgh-based Michael Baker International; a joint venture between Arkansas-based FTN Associates and Dallas-based EJES Inc.; Dallas-based Iconic Consulting Group; Fort Worth-based Kee Concrete and Construction; Fort Worth-based Freese and Nichols; and Headway Environmental's Monroe, Louisiana office. Michael Baker International, Iconic Consulting Group, and Freese and Nichols have offices in Arkansas. The firms hired subconsultants.

The project is serving communities with largely minority populations. When Cosby announced the investment had been made, he said he wanted to see diverse, small minority firms working on the projects. Three of the primes, Iconic Consulting, EJES, and Kee Concrete and Construction, are minority-owned.

The 14 project areas include the following cities and surrounding areas.

- Project 1 – Hughes and Jennette
- Project 2 – Dumas
- Project 3 – El Dorado
- Project 4 – Madison
- Project 5 – Altheimer
- Project 6 – Stamps and Lewisville
- Project 7 – Turrell
- Project 8 – Eudora
- Project 9 – Wilmot
- Project 10 – Forrest City and Marianna
- Project 11 – Camden
- Project 12 – Pine Bluff
- Project 13 – Helena-West Helena (Long Lake Bayou – Little Bee Bayou watershed)
- Project 14 – Helena-West Helena, Lake View and Marvell (Lick Creek – Big Creek watershed)

The approximately 18-month first phase of planning began in May and is expected to last until February 2025. The ultimate goal is to deliver a PL-566-com-



pliant watershed plan. Doing so paves the way to produce a design plan – another 18-24-month process – and then ideally comes the construction phase. Teams will use existing data, community input, and simulations of storm events to determine best alternatives. Potential

the improvement (commonly considered 50 years) after it is completed. Long-term solutions can take years to be implemented, but along the way, the engineering teams might find low-hanging fruit that can provide some relief.

Continues on next page



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More communities and planning studies could be added, and more money will be needed to fund design and construction projects.

“So \$96 million is phase one, and who knows where that cap is?” said Mike Stengel, P.E., with Michael Baker International and the principal-in-charge of three projects. “But they’re throwing out some pretty big numbers if even half of these projects go all the way through to completion.”

The ABMA is an association of about 30 mayors leading communities with large minority populations. All but two of the mayors are African-American, according to the ABMA’s executive director, Frank Bateman.

Bateman said the group was approached by a gentleman who had worked for NRCS and thought the project might be useful to the association’s members. Nineteen communities responded when asked to participate. Since then, other cities have approached with needs, so the ABMA has applied for an outreach grant to serve them as well.

“We’ll be forever asking NRCS for some planning dollars for some of these other projects,” Bateman said.

McCurdy praised the ABMA for its work.

“They’re awesome,” she said. “They’re very, very supportive, very much advocating for all their member communities and beyond. This isn’t just for their member communities. It’s for the whole region.”

Public involvement focus

Firms are gathering information from FEMA, state agencies, cities, digital sources, and members of the public. A big part of the project involves working with communities, trying to educate the public that the projects exist and where the watersheds are, and learning where the flooding is occurring. These often are big geographic areas serving historically underserved, low-income, minority communities where people built homes on lands subject to flooding. Initial meetings were coordinated by the ABMA. Firms since have been coordinating “public scoping meetings” while also meeting with resource and regulatory agencies. Keith Britton, P.E., owner of



CRAFTON TULL’S KAREN MCCURDY, P.E., left, stands with Altheimer Mayor Zola Hudson following a public scoping meeting at the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church Nov. 7.



Britton

Marianna; Helena-West Helena (Lick Creek – Big Creek watershed); and Madison. The first two are fully funded through construction. It started working with the ABMA in 2018 to help small communities address flooding issues. While working on that initiative, it learned of the grant opportunity and helped the ABMA submit the paperwork.

Britton said the public meetings have gone well.

“Last week we had our maps out,” he said. “We sat down with residents, had some Post-its and stickies and started writing notes and documenting the issues that the community was sharing with us. Some of it ranged from 20-30 years of history, some as recent as 2011 when we had that big flood over a large portion of the state.”

Iconic Consulting Group, likened the process of getting residents to participate to trying to get citizens to vote.

Iconic is the prime on three of the projects: Forrest City-Haynes-

A public scoping meeting was held in Altheimer Nov. 7. It was led by Kelley Eubanks, CEO and managing partner of Kee Concrete and Construction, the prime consultant, with assistance from subconsultants CEI and FTN. Eubanks, appearing by teleconference, displayed photos of the area’s frequent flooding issues. She noted that the study encompasses not just Altheimer but the entire Little Bayou Meto Watershed. Engineers are looking at culverts, ditches, drainage and other potential low-hanging fruit and talking to residents inside and outside of the city. They are studying resource concerns – soil, water, air, plants, animals and human beings – and seeing how flooding impacts them and also how mitigation efforts would affect them. Also studied are “cultural resources.” Those include concerns like the 15 Native American tribes with an interest in Arkansas who must be consulted on such issues. Engineers are looking at prior studies and projects planned or in progress, including a major project already happening in the watershed that is being managed by the Bayou Meto Water Management District. The teams also interact with government agencies and nonprofits that have an interest in the area. The next day, the engineering team met in Little Rock with government agencies.

Working with Kee Concrete and Construction on the Helena-West Helena and Altheimer projects as technical engineers are CEI Engineering and FTN Associates. CEI’s Anna Stamps, P.E., said the project involves a higher level of community engagement than engineering firms usually do. Typically, firms will work with municipal leaders and there will be a public information meeting, and that’s the end of it. They meet with the public when they have a 30% concept plan, take comments and make adjustments, and finish their work. In this case, they will have public comments at the start and then at 30%, 60% and 90% completion. The public will always have up-to-date information.

Engineers are helping communities identify low-hanging fruit that may not cost much money but will alleviate part of the problem. Many cities lack financial resources, so firms and communities need to be creative. Stamps said it’s important that the residents see progress.

"I think that's going to be key for the community to get behind it and to keep it moving forward," she said. "[A] concern out of the community in the public input meetings [is], how long is this going to take? Are we going to actually see something happen? When are we going to start to see impacts to our lives? And I can't blame them. I think that's just the general fundamental human concern whenever you have someone coming in and doing a project of this nature, is that they're going to be concerned about when is it actually going to affect me? When do I get to see the fruits of all this? And so, yeah, finding that low hanging fruit and finding those things that the community can start putting in place today is going to be key to help get community support and help keep the momentum going."

The process will follow the NRCS-prescribed format with a preliminary review process, a draft plan with a public comment period, and then the final plan that will be approved by the NRCS. Then the project moves to the design phase. A lot of planning will occur between the third quarter of 2023 through the first quarter of 2025. Stamps said CEI doesn't have direct experience working with PL-566 projects, but it does have experience with flood plain management, floodplain analysis and watershed planning. It also has experience working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and is getting help from former USDA employees who are helping ensure planners are following the PL-566 guidelines.

Kalven Trice, the former NRCS state director, is doing quality control.

"It's really important that we do exactly and we format it exactly the way that they want to see it," Stamps said. "It's very systematic the way this program works, and so there's a lot of checkboxes we have to hit along the way, and so he's there to help guide that process and help make sure that we're hitting those checkboxes."

FTN Associates' Philip Massirer, P.E., and Stamps described problems with Alzheimer's drainage infrastructure that engineers can already see. A single ditch runs through the middle of town on the southeast side of the railroad tracks, but it's hard to see because it's all grown up with weeds. The culverts leading to it are filled in, have ends crushed, and were too small to begin with. It leaves town on the east side. The natural drain from there would be due east, but the ditch has been rerouted around the north side of the field. Perhaps minor maintenance could have made things better, but now mature trees 40-50 feet high have grown up around the ditch. A lot of old infrastructure hasn't been updated.



Stamps

"We hear a lot of things that actually can be fixed pretty easily. ... Right now is the best time to go talk [to] a community about leaves," Stamps said. "You would be shocked by the amount of damage that buildup of leaves in a drainage ditch could do to you or your neighbor or someone downstream."

Within the city limits, the biggest concern is that when it rains, stormwater is infiltrating into sewer systems and backing up into people's homes.

"That shouldn't be ever an issue," Stamps said. "That's basic health and sanitation and quality of life issues. That shouldn't be happening in Arkansas, in America, etc. Those are concerns that you hear about from a different country, different economic circumstances."

Alzheimer Mayor Zola Hudson is hopeful the project will help her constituents overcome persistent flooding issues where water can cover streets and get into people's homes. It can take days for it to recede.

"There are many times that I've called the Red Cross for families, that, where are they going to spend the night when there's water in the house up to past your baseboards?" she said.

FTN Associates is involved in three separate teams. It's the prime consultant as part of a partnership with EJES out of Dallas for the Pine Bluff and Stamps/Lewisville projects. It is a subconsultant for Kee Concrete and Construction for the Alzheimer and Helena projects. It's also a subconsultant on projects led by Michael Baker International for projects centered in Camden, Dumas and Turrell.

Pine Bluff was one of the five watersheds that was funded through the design and construction phases. In fact, it received a third of the total funding. Massirer said FTN has been doing a lot of public outreach and hydrologic and hydraulic modeling in the Pine Bluff area. H&H modeling takes into account that what happens in one place may affect another area upstream

Continues on next page

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or downstream. In Pine Bluff urban areas, the problems are mostly associated with street flooding based on the rain that falls there. One fire station in Pine Bluff is three feet below street level. Of course it's going to flood. Around town, inlets are inadequate and underground drainage might be overwhelmed.

The focus of PL-566 has been on small watersheds. Massirer said the projects won't end up controlling water levels on the Arkansas River. But engineers will acknowledge what it takes to address an issue that is bigger than the program's scope.

He said engineers will design alternatives that will be helpful, but they are reminding local residents that the projects will take years to complete. The planning process will have to undergo NRCS review.

"We're optimistic that we can provide some relief," he said. "We're trying to manage people's expectations that we can't solve every little problem everywhere, and again all of that is dependent on funding, for sure, in terms of the construction."

Michael Baker International led another public scoping meeting in Camden Dec. 7. That project encompasses 22 communities. One resident said she has had to be boated out and then boated back in to get clothes. Another said beavers build dams that add to the problem. One resident said the Ouachita River, which splits the city, in the past was dredged more often than it is now. Mujahid Chandoo, P.E., a senior project manager with Michael Baker, and T.J. Holliday, the firm's environmental lead and biologist, said engineers are aware of the issue and that the Army Corps of Engineers would like to dredge more, but there are environmental concerns to work through. An endangered mussel species must be considered. Detention basins could be constructed in forests, but endangered bats live in those areas. Chandoo told residents that the watershed draining into Camden is 5,000 square miles – equivalent to the size of Kentucky.

Michael Baker International's Stengel is the principal-in-charge of that project along with projects in Dumas and Turrell. Subconsultants include FTN Associates along with two other firms – The Pri-



FTN ASSOCIATES' PHILIP MASSIRER, P.E., right, speaks with a local resident of the Altheimer community during a public scoping meeting at the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church Nov. 7.

ority Group out of McKinney, Texas, and Double A Plus Engineering, a new firm owned by Emanuel Banks, P.E., the former deputy director and chief engineer of the Arkansas Department of Transportation. Banks is the public involvement lead, an area where he has a lot of experience. Stengel and Holliday said the projects involve complex work creating mitigation strategies. H&H studies will determine where the major flood areas are, determine impacts of flooding, and rank the priority areas. Once the studies are done, solutions will have to go through the National Environmental Policy Act Review process, where impacts on the natural and human environment will be considered. One challenge is the fact that projects might cover more than one watershed. Camden and Turrell, for example, both cover two watersheds, while Dumas covers one large one.

Stengel pointed out that Camden, Dumas and Turrell are incorporated cities with mayors, boards, and officials who have contacts and expertise. But the projects also involve communities outside of those cities and out in the counties.

He said one of the project's challenges is its aggressive schedule. Draft documents for the five fully funded projects, including Camden, are due in January, with others due later. He said the program started a little slowly, but the deadlines didn't change.

"The process involves so much public involvement, so much agency coordination," he said. "These are usually studies that are completed over a matter of about a year, so we're squeezing it in a very compressed time frame."

Collaboration and partnership

Engineering firms have been collaborating closely on the projects. Britton noted that one of his watersheds is close to one of Kee Concrete and Construction's, so they have cross-shared information. Firms are also hiring each other. Iconic, a relatively small firm with four offices including one in Little Rock, is the prime for projects involving Olsson, a national firm with more than 2,000 employees in nine states. Britton said that when his was one of seven firms awarded prime consultant responsibilities, he knew he needed to find a partner with PL-566 watershed experience, which he understood was rare. He also wanted a firm he already had a relationship with. He was working on a project in Nebraska with Olsson employees and happened to ask over dinner if Olsson had worked on those types of projects.

"It doesn't happen that often, and this is, to me it's a great opportunity for us to be in a prime role because we're a smaller firm," Britton said. "We're typically a sub, right? But this opportunity here, I was in a position where we had the relation-

ship. We had been doing a lot of the leg- and groundwork already, and so it made sense for us to be the prime and having a larger firm under us.”

Olsson is not the only firm helping Iconic. In fact, Britton built a team of seven firms who all will have a scope of work on all three projects.

Valerie Miller, Ph.D., a technical expert and certified planner and water policy expert, is the project manager for Olsson. She said relatively few firms have experience with the PL-566 program because it's been dormant for so long. Olsson does have experience working with projects in Kansas and Nebraska.

Miller said two stories have been consistent across the watersheds. One is that designs are typically open ditch channels that fill up quickly during medium to large rainstorms. Meanwhile, the storms cause debris to enter the ditches that remains there or moves elsewhere in the system, lessening the volume of water that can be captured in future rain events.

That means the ditch system needs to be cleaned out or expanded, and it needs to be verified that it is the correct size for the community. As is true across any community, the infrastructure is aging. Planners will need to look at the system's age and size to see if population changes have impacted its ability to work effectively.

The other story is that significant lakes and tributaries run through the communities with very little elevation changes. The soils are rich, which means they can capture and hold water, but there's a lot to hold. Perhaps additional engineering might be needed to capture water in high-rain events.

Miller, who is based in Texas, said one potential result of the project is a better, more formal statewide process for monitoring Arkansas' watersheds. Texas has 16 regions that are required to create a new plan or update it periodically to ensure that projects are being put in place and are working. Arkansas needs to partner with NRCS, FEMA and local agencies.

Water projects are complex. Miller said a fix in one city could affect another. A regional watershed focus is needed.

Will the project ultimately solve all flooding and drainage issues in the affected areas? Undoubtedly no. Perfection is not the goal. Making real, lasting change is, and engineering firms are on their way to accomplishing it.

“We don't want to do all this work and put it in a binder and put it on a bookshelf,” Miller said. “We want this to be a living, working program, so we're going to look at each of these suggestions we make and see what are some possible projects that are more likely to happen in probably within the next five years, and what are other projects that should happen that might take 10 or 15. And then from there, how do we help get them implemented? Many times, the issue is money, but with the amount of state and federal funding right now for flooding projects, this is a great time to be doing the work we're doing.”

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ACEC/A Trap Shoot



SHOOTING AROUND. Top left, Lawren Wilcox, P.E., of Garver shatters a trap. Top right, so does Blake Martin, P.E., PTOE, CFM of Garver. Right, Clark Contractors' winning team was, from left, Daniel Earls, Tommy Cooper, Lance Smith, Byron Smith and Justin Smith. Cooper was the overall individual winner. Bottom left, Jared Wiley, P.E., of ArDOT placed second among individual shooters. Bottom middle, Walter Collins, P.E., with the Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority takes aim. Bottom right, Roger Dodds, P.E., with FTN Associates celebrates as ACEC/A Executive Director Angie W. Cooper hands him his raffle winnings – again.



Clark Contractors wins ACEC/A Trap Shoot

The 2nd Annual ACEC/A Trap Shoot brought 17 teams and dozens of sharpshooters to the Jacksonville Shooting Sports Complex Nov. 1, but none of them were as sharp as Clark Contractors.

The team of Tommy Cooper, Daniel Earls, Lance Smith, Byron Smith and Justin Smith placed first. Cooper was the overall individual winner. Jared Wiley, P.E., ArDOT chief engineer for pre-con-

struction, placed second among individual shooters.

Roger Dodds, P.E., vice president-engineering of FTN Associates, won the \$1,000 raffle. ACEC/A Executive Direc-



MORE TRAP SHOTS. Top left, Andrew Dodds, P.E., of Garver destroys a trap. Top right, David Hubbard of McClelland Consulting Engineers also hits his target. Right, so does Adam Triche, P.E., also of MCE. Bottom left, Steve Mallett with the Russellville City Corporation shoots. He did destroy the trap, which is cropped out of the photo.



tor Angie W. Cooper noted Dodds' run of good fortune. It was his second time to win an ACEC/A raffle, the first one earning him a shotgun, and he also twice has won raffles at the ACEC Deep South Conference.

Sponsors included: lunch sponsor – Garver; target sponsor – Michael Baker International; pull sponsors – Clark Contractors, ETEC, McClelland Consulting Engineers, Pickering Firm; other sponsors – Cadence Insurance, nu marketing.

Lunch was served by the Cross-Eyed Pig.

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This final phase of renovation at Joe Hogan is a two-part project that will include a new indoor production facility, office, and a water re-use system for the hatchery ponds. The indoor production facility will increase both production and efficiency for several species being cultured there, like Florida Largemouth Bass and Channel Catfish.

ACEC/A Member Spotlight

MCE turns 60, opens Rogers office

Born in 1963, McClelland Consulting Engineers has done civil engineering on some of Arkansas' highest profile projects.

McClelland Consulting Engineers turned 60 years old this year, and one way it's "celebrating" is by opening a new office in Rogers.

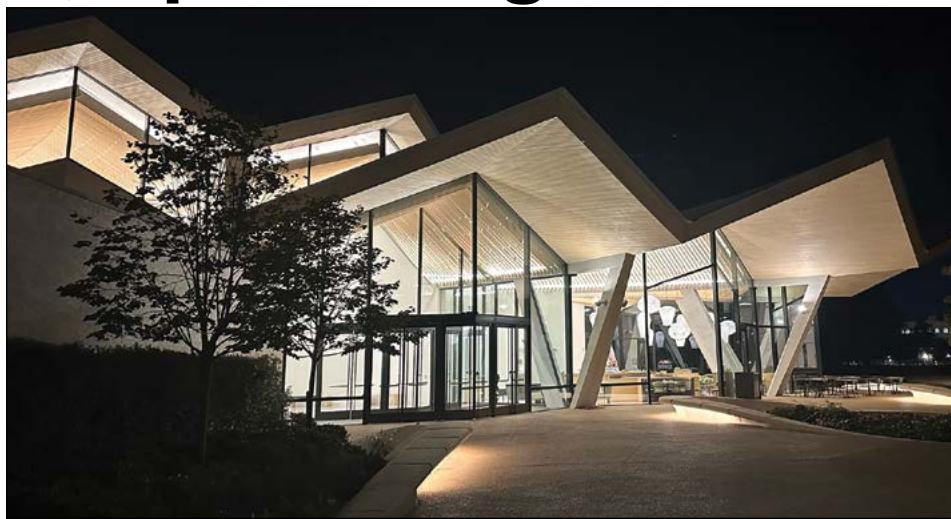
The office, which the firm plans to open in January, initially will house 4-5 employees but will have capacity for 10-12.

It will support MCE's office in Fayetteville, the city where James F. McClelland started the firm in 1963. The Rogers office will serve projects in the area and cut down on the commutes of valued employees.

The firm has had an office in Little Rock since 1976 that was opened by McClelland's son, Jim. It also has an office in Fort Smith. It has more than 150 employees, including 27 professional engineers and 39 engineering interns/designers.

Byron Hicks, P.E., CEO, said that MCE started as a civil engineering firm that did mostly water and wastewater projects. Over the years, it has diversified with multiple departments performing services across the civil engineering spectrum. This year, it opened up a structural engineering arm. In recent years, it has brought its materials testing and geotechnical engineering services to its Little Rock office in addition to its office in Fayetteville.

MCE's list of completed projects includes many very high-profile ones. It did the civil design work for the Clinton Presidential Center, for example. Other projects include the Heifer International headquarters, the Junction Bridge connecting Little Rock and North Little Rock, Saracen Casino Resort in Pine Bluff, the Northwest Arkansas Children's Hospital, Riverside Park in Benton, and The Momentary, a contemporary art museum located in a decommissioned cheese factory in Bentonville. Another project was the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts in Little Rock, which completed a major renovation and expansion in early 2023.



THE ARKANSAS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS in Little Rock, top, is one of McClelland Consulting Engineers' most recent recognizable state projects. MCE has also been doing civil engineering work for the **Texarkana Regional Airport**, bottom photo.

MCE's design work helped blur the lines between the museum and the adjacent park.

MCE recently helped replace the turf at Donald W. Reynolds Razorback Stadium at the University of Arkansas. It has been working with the program since the 1960s when Athletic Director Frank Broyles hired it to replace the regular turf with astroturf.

"Those are just a few that as the years pass, you can look back and it's kind of neat to be able to say, 'We worked on that. We were part of this project,'" Hicks said.

Hicks said MCE is hardly resting on its laurels. It's working on a 500-acre park in Benton that will include an RV park, soccer complex and other amenities. It's also working on a two-mile roadway in Lonoke County that will relieve conges-

tion in the area. It's been working with the Texarkana Regional Airport Authority on development projects that include a new, full-length parallel taxiway, an aircraft parking apron, a new terminal building with two gates, parking lots and an access road. Construction began in 2019 and is expected to be completed in the summer of 2024.

MCE is also working on the Fayetteville West Side Transmission Line project, an 11-mile, 48-inch water line extending from the Beaver Water District's system all the way to the western edge of Fayetteville. It also will serve Elm Springs, Tontitown and Springdale. Designed for pressures up to 403 pounds per square inch, it will provide additional capacity and redundancy needed for the area's rapid growth.



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