

Building Arkansas

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



Grand Conceptor

When Central Arkansas Water needed to rehabilitate a 72 million-gallon per day pump station serving 500,000 people in Little Rock and North Little Rock, it called on Garver. Paul Strickland, P.E., led design efforts that included replacing 10 horizontal split case pumps, as well as keeping the station open throughout the process. After six years, the project was completed in January 2024. It received the highest award, the Grand Conceptor Award, at the ACEC/A's Engineering Excellence Awards Banquet March 6. The People's Choice Award, selected by banquet attendees, went to Crist Engineers for improvements it made to the Jim Hinkle Spring River State Hatchery for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. Full coverage of all the award winners is inside. *Photo by Michael Priest, Garver.*



ASPE has full agenda for conference

No charge for new PEs to attend if they register, plus reception at Top Golf venue

Plans have taken shape for the ASPE Annual Conference, which will be April 17 at the ALOFT - West Little Rock hotel at 716 Rahling Road.

This is the second year ASPE has shortened the Annual Conference to one day and held the event in Little Rock. Last year's was the best attended conference in years.

The cost to attend is \$175 for NSPE members and \$200 for nonmembers. Engineers who became licensed after May 1, 2024, can attend for free if they register beforehand. Registration forms are available at arkansasengineers.org.

The conference opens with a welcome reception from 6-8 p.m. April 16 at the Top Golf venue at 5 Top Golf Way in Little Rock.

2025 ASPE Conference Registration



2025 ASPE Conference Sponsorship



Fair

Registration will start the next day at 7:30 a.m. After President Mary Fair, P.E., makes opening remarks at 8 a.m. Rick Geraci, P.E., will make an ethics presentation titled, "Me, Myself and A.I."

Geraci's remarks will be followed by comments by Nick Fair, CPA, CFP with



Geraci



Estes

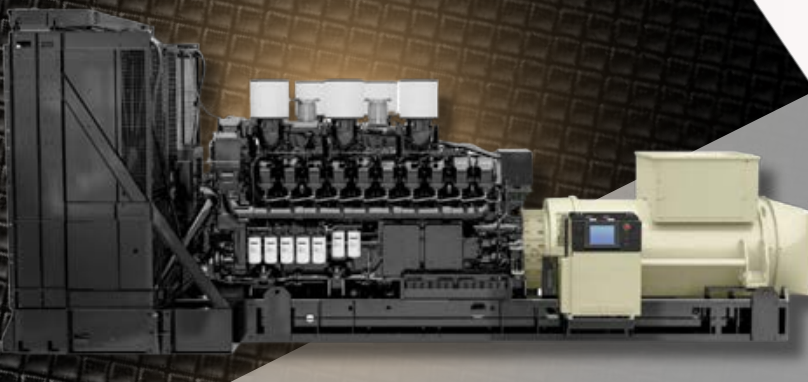
Fair and Company CPAs, about research and development tax credits and Section 174 expenses. Ken Estes with Gallagher

Please see ASPE on [page 19](#)

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20 Garver's Paul Strickland, P.E., poses with the Grand Conceptor Award at the Central Arkansas Water Pump Station 1-A. The project involved replacing 10 horizontal split case pumps and electrical equipment.

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Plans have taken shape for the ASPE Annual Conference, which will be April 17 at the ALOFT - West Little Rock hotel at 716 Rahling Road.

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Kimley-Horn has had an Arkansas office for less than two years, but it's already grown to a staff of 11 – and it plans to grow a lot more.

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A Garver rehabilitation project for a pump station serving much of Little Rock and North Little Rock was this year's Grand Conceptor Award winner at the ACEC/A's Engineering Excellence Awards March 6.

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CONGRATULATIONS!

**AMANDA FURR, P.E., LITTLE ROCK OFFICE EXECUTIVE
2025 WTS ARKANSAS PRESIDENT'S AWARD WINNER**



Michael Baker International is thrilled to celebrate Amanda Furr, who has been honored with the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) Arkansas President's Award for Outstanding Leadership.

Amanda has shown exceptional service to the chapter and the transportation industry through her strong leadership and advocacy, both within the chapter and the community.



**SCAN TO
LEARN
MORE!**

I-40/White Oak Crossing Interchange / Maumelle, Arkansas

AI is here to help, but it must be a tool, not a crutch

The engineering profession is typically pretty quick to adapt to new technology. It's often essential in a competitive market.

But what happens to our industry when artificial intelligence (AI) starts to dominate the new technology? Let's see what AI can tell us about its own dangers in our profession.

"Using AI in engineering offers great potential but raises concerns, such as job displacement, reliability, and transparency. AI models can make flawed decisions if data is biased or incomplete, especially in critical fields like aerospace or structural engineering. Ethical issues, such as privacy and bias, also arise, along with security risks from cyberattacks. Over-reliance on AI could erode human expertise, and high costs may limit accessibility for smaller firms. Additionally, unclear regulations and accountability in case of failures are important challenges to address. Ensuring human oversight and clear standards is crucial for safe, effective AI use in engineering."

Decent answer, huh? This short paragraph generated by ChatGPT could save me a lot of time and stress writing this column. It can expand or shorten it. I can simply ask a question and get a completely generated response to fill this page. With proper oversight, this tool can be beneficial to all types of industries. It can also be wrong. I must disagree with ChatGPT here as I don't think AI is going to be creating any "job displacement" anytime soon. This is why you always fact check AI.

At last year's ACEC national conference, I attended several sessions that discussed AI, and what I heard is that AI should be used as a tool for increasing efficiency, problem-solving, and innovation. We're a long way away from sending any engineers to the unemployment line, but those firms that do not embrace the new technology will find themselves behind the eight ball. In fact, we're likely



Jerry Kelso, P.E.
ACEC/A President

already using some sort of AI to create models of varying sorts. But as this new technology grows, it is important to be aware of its capabilities and to ensure you're using this technology as an assistant and not a stand-in.

In early March, the ACEC Research Institute released the Q1 Engineering Business Sentiment Study results. A couple of key findings pertained to AI, including the fact that 78% of the industry believes AI will positively impact their firm in the coming year. It also was found that 63% of firms are already developing strategies to make the most of AI technology.

As helpful as AI can be, we need to always remember that AI is not human, and the work it produces is not copyrightable. AI is not an entity that can be held accountable. As professionals, we are still liable for the work we produce, and we can't shift that liability to our tools (software, hardware, etc.). Therefore, using this technology should come with caution. It can also be beneficial to understand how AI systems work, as this is a growing field of technology that is only going to be more prevalent.

In the summer of 2024, ACEC released guidelines for using AI in our industry, and the things I've discussed are all mentioned: copyright, ethics, reliability, etc. In addition to preparing for what the future holds regarding AI, I encourage you to make sure your firm has an AI policy, and be sure everyone knows about it so the entire team is on the same page. AI is a helpful tool, but the human element should remain in all aspects of your business in order to remain successful.

We need to embrace this new technology, but we also need to make sure we are using this technology in a beneficial and ethical way. Ultimately, that is the approach that is going to ensure we are getting the most out of this new technology in the best way.

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Conference unites professional growth, policy and practice

As engineers, our responsibilities extend far beyond designing and improving infrastructure. Our work touches every corner of society, from designing essential services to informing and influencing policies. We serve as advisors, stewards of public trust and funds, and most importantly, passionate advocates for policies that support the future of our profession.

Professional engagement through ASPE is one of the most valuable ways to remain informed about legislative changes and regulatory shifts. Informing and mobilizing members is central to ASPE. Staying updated on policy isn't merely about protecting our licensure. It's about enhancing our role as trusted infrastructure experts. By keeping up with funding opportunities or barriers, regulatory changes, and new legislation, we position ourselves to react thoughtfully to challenges and offer informed guidance to clients or project partners.

Legislation impacts every stage of our projects, from construction and labor to project delivery and future infrastructure stability. Engineers should stay informed, advocate for sound policies, and ensure our work serves the communities where we live and work. Whether you're a consultant, an owner, or an early career professional, engaging with ASPE's policy tracking capabilities is crucial to staying informed and anticipating challenges.

This year's annual ASPE Annual Conference on April 17 is a great opportunity to engage with our organization's resources and to brush up on the policies affecting our industry. Last year, we retooled the conference in response to your feedback. Building on the success of last year's program, we're continuing to provide a diverse schedule with sessions ranging from technical content to legislative monitoring to ethics training, ensuring attendees at every level of experience find valuable content whether it be technical, legislative, or more generalized.



Mary Fair, P.E.
ASPE President

Beyond the sessions and workshops, the conference offers a unique platform for forging new professional relationships. The night before the conference, ASPE is hosting a free networking event at Top Golf for all attendees – offering a relaxed setting to connect with industry peers. During the conference, you'll have a full

day to interact with fellow engineers, along with a joint happy hour with Women's Transportation Seminar. Engaging with industry counterparts not only broadens your perspective but also fosters partnerships that drive innovation and support our industry's growth. In an ever-evolving regulatory landscape, these connections are invaluable and can help you navigate diverse challenges effectively. By meeting new people, you'll enhance your professional network and gain a better understanding of the legislation critical to the communities that rely on you.

This conference isn't just for licensed PEs or industry veterans. It's for those at any level in the industry, from any sector. Expanding participation strengthens our profession by ensuring engineers, no matter their specialty or experience, have the tools and knowledge they need to succeed.

I encourage each of you to leverage the opportunities and tools ASPE provides, not only during the conference, but throughout the year via our legislative updates, Government Affairs Committee, and year-round engagement. By staying informed and involved, we strengthen not only our individual careers but also the future of engineering in Arkansas.

I'm grateful to the sponsors of our conference who ensure we have a meaningful space to connect and learn year after year. Their commitment to advancing the engineering profession is truly impactful. I look forward to seeing you all at the conference and continuing this important work together. You can register and find additional conference information here: <https://bit.ly/4bzZrpV>.

In the News

Benchmark Group becoming an ESOP

Benchmark Group announced its transition to an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) Jan. 16.

As a member of an ESOP trust, the company is now 100% employee owned, allowing its employees to share in its growth and value.

The ESOP will provide a retirement benefit for employees by allowing them to share in the company's profits. ESOPs are also shown to provide increased job satisfaction and security, increased productivity, and increased employee retention.

The move provides a long-term strategy for succession planning by transferring ownership to the next generation.



Kimball

The company's president, David P. Kimball, P.E., stated, "We are excited for this new chapter in our history. It's important to ensure the continued growth and success of Benchmark Group, which was founded in 1978 and built by Paul C. Parks, P.E. This benefits not only the future of the company, but also every team member."

Benchmark Group is a full-service architecture and engineering design firm licensed in all 50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. It consists of more than 250 people with headquarters in Rogers and additional offices in Dallas and Houston.

Crafton Tull acquires planning firm Laneshift

Crafton Tull recently acquired Laneshift, a Bentonville-based company that provides education and planning services related to active transportation.

Founded in 2017 by Ryan Hale, Laneshift will operate as a new division of Crafton Tull under the same name. The



Calendar of events

April 17
[ASPE Annual Conference](#)
 Aloft Little Rock West

April 22
[2nd Annual ACEC/A Awards Luncheon and Membership Meeting](#)
 DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
 Little Rock

April 30
[ACEC/A Northwest Arkansas Clay Shoot](#)
 Legacy Ranch at Dry Creek
 Gravette



LANESHIFT SHIFTS TO CRAFTON TULL.

Matt Crafton, P.E., Crafton Tull president and CEO, right, stands next to Laneshift founder Ryan Hale. Beside them are Marina Kashuban, project manager, and Jacob Truman, lead designer.

four-person team will become employee-owners through Crafton Tull's employee stock ownership plan.

Laneshift offers active transportation education that includes tours of established trail networks and a four-day professional development course called the Active Transportation Academy. It typically partners with cities, companies, developers and advocacy groups to promote active transportation initiatives.

"Laneshift was founded on the vision of strengthening people and places through active transportation," Hale said. "Working alongside the hundreds of tal-

ented professionals at Crafton Tull creates an opportunity to elevate our level of service and impact within communities across the country."

Before founding Laneshift, Hale spent five years as a program officer for the Walton Family Foundation, where he helped plan bike and pedestrian infrastructure in northwest Arkansas. He helped implement the Razorback Greenway, Back 40 mountain biking trails, and Lake Atalanta's redevelopment.

"Ryan Hale and his Laneshift team have established themselves as one of the premier active transportation education and planning organizations in the United States," Crafton Tull President and CEO Matt Crafton, P.E., said.

"Combined with our existing award-winning planning and design teams, we think the collective expertise and experience that we bring in active transportation planning, design and education will be second to none."



Collins



McMahon

Crafton Tull's Collins, McMahon earn PE licenses

Crafton Tull's Hunter Collins, P.E., and Evan McMahon, P.E., recently became licensed civil engineers.

Collins has worked on residential and commercial projects in Northwest Arkansas in Crafton Tull's Fayetteville office for the past four years. He also currently serves as a warrant officer in the U.S. Army Reserves.

McMahon has been a project manager for Crafton Tull since June 2024 and works in the Rogers office on various private development projects.

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ENGINEERING ARKANSAS

GATOR BOULEVARD
BENTONVILLE, AR



Crafton Tull

— In the News —



Osweiler



Bakunas

Osweiler, Bakunas are named MCE's newest partners

McClelland Consulting Engineers has announced that Adam B. Osweiler, P.E., LEED Green Associate, and Chris Bakunas, PLA, ASLA, have advanced to become partners in the firm.

Osweiler started in MCE's Little Rock office in 2012 and moved to its Fayetteville office in August 2019. He serves as senior associate, land development project manager, LEED® Green Associate and now partner. Throughout his career, Osweiler has specialized in hydrology and hydraulics, playing a pivotal role in designing stormwater management systems, infrastructure projects, and floodplain studies.

He is a graduate of the University of Arkansas – Fayetteville and has a master's of science in civil engineering.

Bakunas has been with MCE since 2016 and serves as Land Development Department head. He has worked on projects across the country in commercial and residential developments, parks and open spaces, streetscapes, master planning, and environmental design. He holds a bachelor of landscape architecture from the University of Arkansas – Fayetteville and is registered as a professional landscape architect in Missouri and Arkansas.

He is an accredited arborist and a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, where he served as treasurer of the Arkansas Executive Committee from 2016 to 2022.

Five MCE staffers earn PE licenses, one is now a PS

Five McClelland Consulting Engineers staff members have earned their professional engineer (P.E.) licenses, while another has earned his professional surveyors (P.S.) license.



Scott

Michael Scott, P.E., earned his P.E. license in January. Scott joined MCE in 2015 and has more than nine years of experience in the geotechnical and construction materials testing industry. He helps manage a staff that performs geotechnical investigations and reports, construction materials testing, and special inspection services. He also performs environmental Phase I and Phase II assessments. MCE provides these services across the region out of its Little Rock and Fayetteville offices. He has performed these services for athletic and academic facilities, businesses, hospitals and medical facilities, oil and gas facilities, industrial facilities, roadways, bridges, and numerous other types of projects.



Vocque

Anna Claire Vocque, P.E., a project designer for MCE's Little Rock office, also earned her P.E. license in January 2025. Her background is in geotechnical engineering and land development, which equips her with a deep understanding of how site conditions affect site design. Her work includes project design, budgeting, and project management primarily in the private sector.

Jarrett Elliot, P.E., earned his P.E. license in September 2024. He joined MCE's Little Rock office in May 2023 with more than three years of aviation design experience. He has worked on several

projects and specializes in project development, grant and report writing, project design, building assistance, and construction administration. He graduated from Louisiana Tech University in 2020 with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering.

Haley Hamilton, P.E., earned her P.E. license in July 2024. She joined MCE in October 2021 with six years of experience in planning, design, construction and project management of water/wastewater infrastructure projects. These projects include pipe lines, pump stations, lift stations, treatment plants, drainage systems and roadways. Hamilton is a 2015 University of Arkansas graduate with a bachelor's in civil engineering and a minor in mathematics.

Caleb Zimmerman, P.E., earned his P.E. license in May 2024. Zimmerman has worked in civil engineering consulting in the field of land development for more than six years, and with McClelland Consulting Engineers for five. During that time, he has worked primarily in the public sector designing site improvements and shared-use paths for cities, municipalities, and schools. He also has done private work on industrial and commercial projects.

Will Wingfield, P.S., a survey party chief, earned his P.S. license in November 2024. He obtained his degree in land surveying from the University of Arkansas at Monticello and is a board-certified



Elliot



Hamilton



Zimmerman

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ROGERS, AR

In the News (Cont'd)



Wingfield

location, site planning, and topographic surveys. He is also experienced in working with robotics, GPS, 3D laser scanning, and GIS. Currently he assists with field collection, drafting, and scheduling day-to-day survey projects.

MCE expands with Texarkana CMT lab

McClelland Consulting Engineers, Inc. has opened a new construction materials testing (CMT) Lab at 5200 Old Post Road in Texarkana, Arkansas. This facility enhances MCE's ability to deliver top-tier CMT and special inspection services across south and southwest Arkansas and East Texas.

CEI's Kevin Hall is director of technical services

Kevin Hall, P.S., was promoted to be CEI's director of technical services. He will serve in a role that oversees and coordinates the technical service departments, including engineering, landscape architecture, and survey.

As director, he will foster collaboration between service and production departments, provide technical mentoring, manage company resources, inspire employee motivation and morale, and maintain positive client relationships.

In addition, he wants to focus on strategically growing and expanding services



Hall

professional surveyor. He has a total of four years of survey experience that consist of many types of land surveys including ALTA/ACSM, boundary, construction,

to continue to meet client needs. He plans to utilize his new position to advance employees, departments, and CEI as a whole "by building teams and creating new opportunities of services that CEI has not offered before."

Hall has been with CEI since 2004. Throughout his 20 years, he has held the roles of field specialist, CAD tech, survey tech, assistant project manager, project manager, and most recently, survey department manager.

"I have been a surveyor my whole career," he said. "Learning more about engineering and design will be my biggest challenge."

The Survey Department will experience seamless leadership. Dustin Riley, P.S., a seasoned survey project manager, has been promoted to Survey Department manager.

"Working with Kevin, I have had the privilege of learning from someone who exemplifies dedication, integrity, and a deep commitment to our profession," he said. "His leadership has taught me that success in surveying is not just about precision in measurements, but also about building trust and fostering growth. I am excited to continue his legacy of excellence and ensure our team remains focused on delivering exceptional surveying services in our community."

Michael Baker's Furr receives WTS state award

Amanda Furr, P.E., with Michael Baker International recently was awarded the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) Arkansas President's Award.

This award annually recognizes individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and significant contributions to the chapter and the transportation industry. It celebrates efforts that align with WTS's mission to attract, sustain, connect and advance women's careers in transportation.

Furr has been actively involved in the WTS Arkansas Chapter since 2020 and currently serves as the chapter secre-



AWARD WINNER. Amanda Furr, P.E., right, with Michael Baker International receives the Women's Transportation Seminar Arkansas President's Award from Suzanne Peyton, P.E., the chapter president.

tary. As the office executive for Michael Baker International's Little Rock office, she oversees and manages a dynamic team encompassing roadway and bridge designers and engineers, construction engineers and inspectors, and survey crews. Furr has more than 10 years of progressive growth in operations leadership roles, including seven years as a chief engineer with the Department of Veterans Affairs and 10 years as a construction project manager.

An Arkansas native, Furr holds a master of science degree in operations management and a bachelor of science degree in industrial engineering from the University of Arkansas – Fayetteville. She also maintains her professional engineering licensure in both Arkansas and Oklahoma.

Michael Baker is a founding sponsor for WTS-Arkansas.

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In the News (Cont'd)

Stovall leading Michael Baker's construction services



Stovall

Luke Stovall, P.E., has joined Michael Baker International as its Construction Services Department manager.

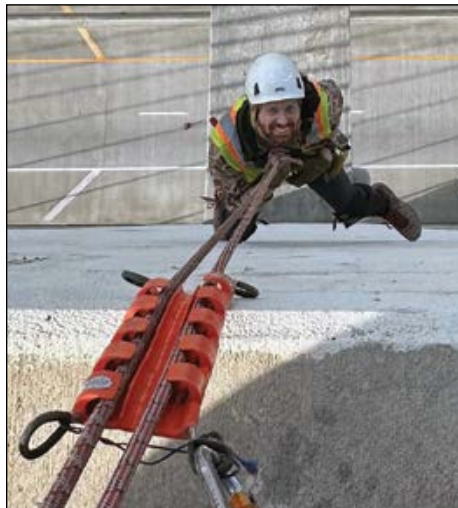
In addition to coordinating, overseeing, and growing the current 10-plus construction engineering and inspection staff in Arkansas, Stovall will also serve as resident engineer for any large construction projects in the state.

Stovall is a familiar face to those in the Arkansas construction industry. He graduated from the University of Arkansas in 2010 with a bachelor of science in civil engineering and worked for the Arkansas Department of Transportation for seven years as a field construction engineer. He also held engineering roles in ARDOT's System Information & Research Division, in program management, and finally as assistant resident engineer in the Construction Division.

He then moved to the private construction industry, serving as a project manager for Weaver-Bailey for five years, working primarily on the widening of Highway 67 and several concrete pavement projects at the Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport. He also worked for a brief period for Emery Sapp & Sons as a senior project manager, and most recently served as a consultant construction engineering manager on a major Interstate 30 improvement project.

Baker earns SPRAT rope inspection certification

Ethan Baker, P.E., S.E., recently joined several Michael Baker staff members in obtaining training for rope-access climbing techniques utilized by bridge inspec-



ETHAN BAKER, P.E., assists with a recent SPRAT inspection of the US 82 bridge over the Mississippi River.

tors. The techniques allow them to perform close-up inspections of bridges that are difficult to access with traditional equipment and methods. Baker earned a Level 1 Rope Access Worker Certification from the Society of Professional Rope Access Technicians (SPRAT).

Since joining the firm, Baker has assisted with numerous bridge inspections, including inspections of the Interstate 40 Hernando de Soto Bridge over the Mississippi River and the U.S. 82 Greenville cable-stayed bridge over the Mississippi River.

Baker serves as a bridge project manager for Michael Baker's Little Rock bridge team. He manages the design of numerous ARDOT and municipal bridges and structures, while also supporting the firm's local and national bridge inspection teams.

Airport Business lists Garver's White in 40 Under 40 list

Airport Business recently recognized Garver Aviation Operations Manager Adam White, P.E., in its Top 40 Under 40 list for 2024.

As head of Garver's Aviation Design Center, White, 38, leads a team of 55 aviation engineering experts. He has overseen the design of infrastructure projects totaling more than \$1 billion nationwide.



ADAM WHITE, P.E., is head of Garver's Aviation Design Center.

White has been instrumental in the \$2.7 billion expansion of Terminals A and C at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, which added 24 new gates. His influence extends beyond the U.S., including a runway extension project where his team accelerated a 1,300-foot runway and taxiway extension program, training pilots from multiple countries.

Throughout his career, White has recognized that the future of aviation rests with the next generation of learners. He is deeply passionate about youth education, engaging with students from high school to recent college graduates.

He frequently speaks to classes at his alma mater, the University of Arkansas, about aviation design and the importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

The University of Arkansas College of Engineering honored White with the Early Career Award in 2023, recognizing his impact on the aviation industry, his alma mater, and the engineers of tomorrow. Additionally, White, alongside two fellow alumni, established an annual scholarship for engineering students at the university.

White is a former board member of the Arkansas Community Foundation, where he reviewed grant applications for innovative early childhood education techniques.

His other honors include being named to *Engineering News-Record Texas & Louisiana's* Top Young Professionals, *Northwest Arkansas Business Journal's* Forty Under 40, the 2019 class of Leadership Arkansas, and *Arkansas Business's* 40 Under 40 list.



ENGINEERS WEEK. In honor of Engineers Week, Garver set out to close the workforce gap by recruiting elementary students. The firm spent the week showing young learners in 30 schools that engineering can be a fun career.

Halff celebrating 75 years in 2025

Halff is celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2025. Since its founding in 1950 by Dr. Albert H. Halff, the firm has grown from a one-man consulting practice into one of the nation's largest infrastructure consulting firms.



DR. ALBERT HALFF
founded Halff.

ership, Halff pioneered advancements in hydraulics, hydrology and floodplain management. His entrepreneurial mindset resulted in the achievement of 13 patents on engineering advances.

"When people hear the name Halff in our industry, they think of excellence, the quality of work and always doing the right thing," said Halff President and CEO Jessica Baker Daily, P.E., CFM, PMP. "Dr. Halff's legacy continues to shine in our culture today. We are so proud to honor

Dr Halff's vision centered on creating resilient infrastructure to positively impact the lives of the people and communities he served. Under his lead-

75 years of his vision, which is rooted in caring for others and making a meaningful impact in our communities. It's our privilege and responsibility to sustain and carry that culture forward. We look toward the future of collaboration, innovation and community as we celebrate this milestone anniversary in 2025. I couldn't

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be more excited about our firm continuing to live out our purpose of improving lives and communities.”

Halff's Templet earns PE license



Templet

Kyle Templet, P.E., has earned his professional engineering license.

Templet is a project manager who works in land development out of Halff's Little Rock office.

He has extensive experience in civil engineering, specializing in hydrologic analyses, gas distribution, landfill design and wetland treatment.

He has been with Halff since 2024.

Olsson's Ulmer retires; work began in 1973



Ulmer

Water and Wastewater Technical Leader Jim Ulmer, P.E., BCEE, retired from Olsson earlier this year.

He joined the firm in 1918 after Olsson acquired McGoodwin Williams & Yates (MWY), where he worked since 1973 focusing on the design and management of water and wastewater systems.

“Congratulations to Jim on his well-deserved retirement,” said Brad Hammond, P.E., Olsson's local area leader in Fayetteville and former president of MWY. “It was a pleasure to work with Jim for so many years. He was a trusted advisor to many communities, and his efforts to improve water and wastewater infrastructure in the state will have a profound positive impact for years to come.”

Ulmer successfully navigated complex permitting and funding of influential projects like the Batesville Water Treatment Plant. He developed respected relationships with various state agencies that were involved in the permitting and review of plans and specifications for projects affecting the water quality within the state.

Among his accomplishments, Ulmer provided guidance to secure the first American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding within the state of Arkansas, and he helped secure more than \$12 million in ARRA funding for the innovative design of a moving bed bio reactor wastewater treatment plant. It was the first wastewater treatment plant of its kind in Arkansas and at the time of construction, it was the largest in the nation.

During his career, Ulmer mentored many engineers and was involved in several organizations, including the American Water Works Association, Academy of Environmental Engineers, the Water Environment Federation, and the Arkansas Academy of Civil Engineering. He is a proud alumnus of the University of Arkansas, where he earned his bachelor of science in civil engineering.

Baker is now Olsson chief financial officer



Baker

Sean Baker took over as Olsson's new chief financial officer on Jan. 1, taking the reins from former CFO Jeff Jenkins, who retired after serving in the role since 2010.

The engineering and design firm has grown significantly under Jenkins' leadership. The company has been named to Engineering News-Record's list of the country's top 100 design firms every year since 2018.

“I can't thank Jeff enough for his leadership,” said Olsson CEO Brad Strittmatter. “His dedication, tenacity and un-

wavering commitment to good financial stewardship have been instrumental to our success.”

Baker joins Olsson with a strong background in public accounting, finance, banking and technology. He most recently spent five years as executive vice president at First National Bank of Omaha. He initially led the company's enterprise digital business strategy before transitioning to lead the individual consumer experience, which included branches, mobile banking, mortgage and wealth management.

Prior to FNBO, Baker spent two decades with Cabela's, including five years as president and CEO of World's Foremost Bank, the organization's co-branded credit card program.

“Sean's experience, expertise and servant leadership approach are a perfect fit for Olsson,” Strittmatter said. “I am excited to work with him to meet the evolving needs of our clients, employees and communities.”

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Poly Processing Company is offering its complete line of tanks in all specific gravities, including with the OR-1000 system, effective April 1.

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ACEC/A Member Spotlight

Kimley-Horn new to state, growing fast

Since opening its Bentonville office in June 2023, it's reached a staff of 11 with big goals for the future

Kimley-Horn has had an Arkansas office for less than two years, but it's already grown to a staff of 11 – and it plans to grow a lot more.

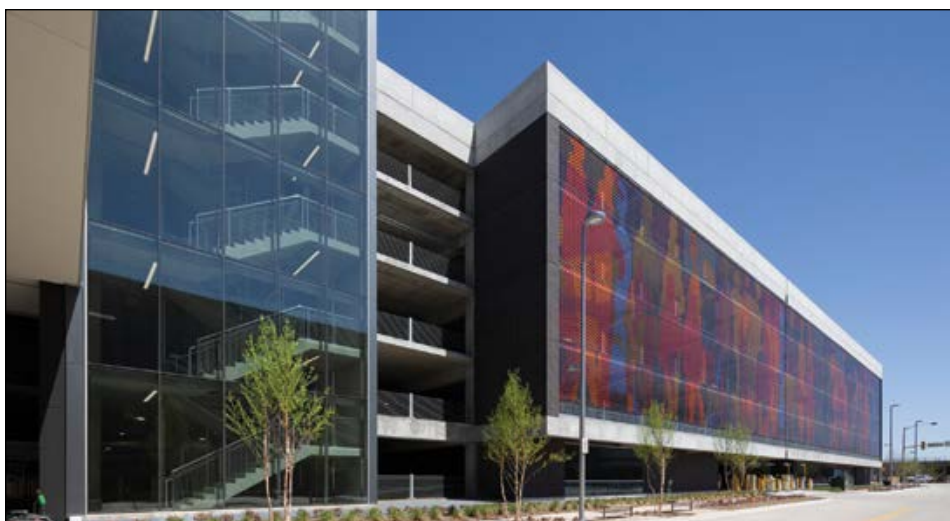
The company opened its Bentonville office in June 2023 and now has six professional engineers there: Matt Cox, Brent Massey, Nate Batchelor, Brianna Covington, Amber Christenson, and Kaden Watkins. The staff of 11 should grow to 14 by the end of the summer.

"Northwest Arkansas is a growing area, and we had a number of staff that went to school here that expressed an interest in wanting to move back to the area," Cox said. "It just made sense."

Cox said his goal is eventually to have a staff of 100-plus in Arkansas. He was part of leadership teams in Charlotte and San Antonio where the offices grew significantly. When he moved to San Antonio in 2014, the office had about 30 members. There were more than 100 when he left to come to Arkansas.

Kimley-Horn is a multidisciplinary firm involved in a wide variety of private development and public infrastructure projects. It's the civil engineering firm for the state's first Buc-ee's travel center location being constructed in Benton. It's also working on a seven-story multifamily development in Fayetteville immediately adjacent to the University of Arkansas. Teams from Austin and Memphis are working on safe streets safety studies for various entities across the state.

"We've got a lot of other projects in the works, but they are generally rolled up into the private sector, single-family, multi-family, commercial, industrial-type projects, office," he said. "We also have a growing public practice as well where we're trying to get in with cities and the DOT, working with them on building roads, bridges, water, sewer, stormwater – everything that goes along with public infrastructure projects."



KIMLEY-HORN'S civil engineering projects have included, top photo, The Star, the 91-acre headquarters of the Dallas Cowboys. Above photo, the firm's Oklahoma City Convention Center won the International Parking & Mobility Institute (IPMI) Award of Excellence in the Mixed-Use Parking & Mobility Facility Design category.

With more than 8,500 employees in more than 140 offices across the United States, Kimley-Horn is capable of a wide variety of projects. It was the civil engineer for the 3.8-mile Formula 1 racetrack in Las Vegas. It also did the civil engineering design work for the Sphere entertainment venue in the same city. More than 90% of its business comes from repeat clients.

Cox, who has been with the firm since 2003, said Kimley-Horn has an entrepreneurial culture and is committed to empowering employees through career growth opportunities.

He said the company is "fiercely" 100% employee owned. Active professionals are invited to be owners after their impact on the firm has grown to a certain point.

"We're more than just engineers," he said. "We're planners, environmental scientists. We apply creativity and rigor to deliver outstanding results for our clients, whether national or local. Whether our clients involve public or private funding, we've got a long track record of developing solutions that save our clients time and money. We truly are a one-stop shop, multidisciplinary consultancy."

ASPE

Continued from [page 2](#)

Insurance will lead a session on risk management. Lunch will be catered by Bishop's BBQ and will feature an Order of the Engineer ceremony.

Lunch will be followed by four sessions, starting with one led by Garver's Jessica Halbrook, P.E., and Kathryn McCoy, P.E., CFM; and Victoria Elliott, E.I., with the Arkansas Department of Transportation. It will be titled, "Facing the Underminer: The Fellowship that Saved I-440."

The next session will be led by Whit Montague, P.E., CFM, with the Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Department of Natural Resources. The presentation is titled, "Arkansas Dams – Regulations and Practical Strategies for Risk Assessment and Mitigation."

The next discussion will cover "Growth and Development Impacts on Municipalities." It will be led by Suzanne Peyton, P.E., CFM, with the Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport; Blake Weindorf, P.E., BCEE, with Central Arkansas Water; and Becky Keough with the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration.

Heather Richardson with the Arkansas State Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Professional Surveyors will give a legislative update and recognize the state's newest professional engineers.

The conference will conclude with chapter and board updates and the ceremonial "passing of the gavel" from Fair to next year's president, President-elect



Miller

Landon Miller, P.E., with Michael Baker International.

A joint "happy hour" with WTS – Women's Transportation Seminar will be held from 5 p.m. until

7 p.m. at the WXYZ Bar. Cost to attend is \$15 for members and \$20 for nonmembers and includes two drink tickets and light snacks.

ASPE is looking for sponsors for the event. Current sponsors include: Diamond – Garver, Michael Baker International; Venue – Missouri S&T, Terracon; Social – McGeorge, Neel-Schaffer; Lunch – Crafton Tull; Industry – Freese and Nichols, McClelland Consulting Engineers.

For more information about sponsoring the conference, please go to arkansasengineers.org.



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GRAND CONCEPTOR. Garver won the top award at the Engineering Excellence Awards banquet for the Central Arkansas Water Pump Station 1-A Rehabilitation project. Pictured from left are Tad Bohannon and Jim Ferguson; P.E., Central Arkansas Water; Paul Strickland, P.E., Garver; and Joe O'Hara, P.E., Central Arkansas Water.

Garver project a Grand Concept

The project involved replacing 10 horizontal split case pumps serving 500,000 residents

A Garver rehabilitation project for a pump station serving much of Little Rock and North Little Rock was this year's Grand Conceptor Award winner at the ACEC/A's Engineering Excellence Awards March 6.

Garver won the award for the Central Arkansas Water Pump Station 1-A Rehabilitation project. The project was completed in January 2024 after about a six-year process.

Originally constructed in the early 1960s, Central Arkansas Water's 72 million-gallon-per-day pump station serves

All banquet photos courtesy of Michael Priest, Garver

a population of almost 500,000 and is the largest drinking water pump station in CAW's system. Due to its advanced age, CAW had concerns about its life expectancy and ability to provide a reliable water supply to the Little Rock and North Little Rock communities.

CAW selected Garver to rehabilitate the pump station, which includes 10 horizontal split case pumps and electrical equipment. Five of the pumps serve the Pulaski Heights zone, and five serve another pressure zone known as the Intermediate System.

Garver and CAW divided the project into two construction phases, each

rehabilitating five pumps and associated electrical gear, to optimize budget and maintain operation during construction. The design team collaborated with CAW's operations staff to minimize construction impacts on customer water supply. Two of the pumps serving Pulaski Heights and three serving the Intermediate System were rehabilitated in the first phase, and then three serving Pulaski Heights and two serving the Intermediate System were rehabilitated in the second phase. The equipment replacements were made during low-demand times between October 1 and April 1 when customers were not watering their yards.

"The challenge was to do these pump replacements and not lose the pumping capability of the station," said Paul Strickland, P.E., project manager.



GARVER'S Paul Strickland, P.E., poses with the Grand Conceptor Award at the Central Arkansas Water Pump Station 1-A. The project involved replacing 10 horizontal split case pumps and electrical equipment. Photo by Michael Priest, Garver.

Prior to the rehabilitation project, the pumps were having cavitation issues where the water was reaching such a low pressure that it would become vapor bubbles and then release energy when it returned to a liquid state. The situation was deteriorating the pumps. Computer modeling showed the piping on each pump's suction side was too small in diameter, so engineers increased the pipe size and mitigated the problem.

Garver also provided building, structural, ventilation, and electrical rehabilitation and improvements throughout the pump station, including the replacement of the 2.4 kilovolt unit distribution center and low voltage panel boards. The building structure had cracks in the walls due to rigid connections to the overhead bridge crane, so engineers created more free-floating connections. The changes improved safety, reliability, and efficiency. Additionally, Garver helped CAW secure

Arkansas Natural Resources Division state revolving fund loans.

In addition to winning the Grand Conceptor Award, the project won in **Category F: Water and Wastewater, Large Project**.

There was one Honor Award recipient in that category: PMI, A Terracon Company for the Lost Bridge Village Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements for the Lost Bridge Village Water and Sewer Improvement Districts Number 1 and 2.

People's Choice Award

Another award given at the banquet is the People's Choice Award sponsored by Gallagher Insurance, which is chosen by banquet attendees.

This year's winner of the award was Crist Engineers for the Jim Hinkle Spring River State Hatchery Improvements project for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

The project involved installing 24 new concrete tanks with hydraulic flow controls. New pipe penetrations were cored through the existing water supply tunnel to provide improved hydraulic control. Two new mechanical screens were installed to remove aquatic vegetation. These utilized the existing support structure while minimizing the deposition of debris in the tanks. Telescoping valves was installed to regulate underflow to control the dissolved oxygen profile in the hatchery tanks for fish growth and sustainability. Flow control baffles control the angular velocity of inlet feed water piping. As the trout grow, the velocity is increased to support fish health and sustainability. High-build epoxy coating was applied to create a smooth surface on the tanks' interior to prevent skin abrasion on the trout. A new UV disinfection unit will eradicate infectious pancreatic

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PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD.

Crist Engineers received the People's Choice Award as voted upon by Engineering Excellence Awards banquet attendees for the Jim Hinkle Spring River State Hatchery Improvements for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. The project also won in Category I, Special Projects, Large Project. Pictured above from left are Brian Wintle, P.E., Ph.D., Crist Engineers; B.J. Vandiver, Mike Cantrell, and Thomas Laird, AGFC; Craig Johnson, P.E., Crist Engineers; Ben Batten and Chris Racey, AGFC; and Matt Dunn, P.E., Crist Engineers. Gallagher Insurance sponsored the award.

necrosis virus, a deadly disease contracted by trout, especially fry and fingerlings.

Crist Engineers understood that the project needed to align with the Game and Fish Commission's mission to oversee the protection, conservation and preservation of various species of Arkansas fish and wildlife. The project's completion helps sustain more than 400,000 additional trout that go to Arkansas streams each year. Trout permit holder survey results in 2023 found the state's trout expenditures exceeded \$236 million. Respondents caught between two and three trout and typically spent more than \$700 per trip.

The project also won in **Category I: Special Projects: Large Project**. There were two Honor Award winners in that category. They were:



CATEGORY I: SPECIAL PROJECTS, LARGE PROJECT HONOR AWARD.

Receiving the Honor Award in this category was Olsson for the Mt. Hebron Park and Garrett Road Extension for the City of Rogers. Pictured are Lance Jobe, P.E., City of Rogers, and Brad Hammond, P.E., Olsson.



CATEGORY A: STUDIES, RESEARCH AND CONSULTING. The winner was Crafton Tull for the #MySearcy Community Plans for the City of Searcy. Pictured left photo from left are Crafton Tull's Seth Boles, P.E.; and Brad Peterson, P.E., CFM, LEED AP; Richard Stafford, Searcy director of planning and development; and Crafton Tull's Dave Roberts, PLA, ASLA; Julie Kelso, AICP, PLA, ASLA; and Isaac Sims, AICP, PCED.

- Olsson for the Mt. Hebron Park & Garret Road Extension for the City of Rogers.

- Crafton Tull for the Pompe Park Phases 1, 2 and 3 project for the City of Conway.

Winners in the various other categories were as follows.

Category A: Studies, Research, and Consulting. The winner was Crafton Tull for the My Searcy Community Plans for the City of Searcy.

Crafton Tull worked alongside the city to simultaneously produce three plans — active transportation, parks and recreation, and infrastructure. The community

was involved in all aspects of the planning process. Public engagement events that presented all the planning work allowed those interested in one topic to become educated about the others as well.

Throughout the planning process, the city began to implement plans and

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CATEGORY A HONOR AWARD. Halfff received the Honor Award for the Jonesboro Health Accelerator Plan. Pictured are Halfff's Brian Vazquez, PLA, CLARB; Alejandra Morales, City of Jonesboro; and Marcos Aleman, PLA, and Joshua Vines, P.E., Halfff.



CATEGORY A HONOR AWARD. Garver received the Honor Award in this category for the Springdale Citywide Transportation Study. Pictured are Garver's Juliet Richey, Tristan Hill and Zach Moore, P.E.



CATEGORY C: STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS, LARGE PROJECT. The winner was Olsson for the West Avenue Parking Deck for the City of Fayetteville. From left are Justin Clay with the City of Fayetteville and Brad Hammond, P.E., and Andy Brewer, P.E., PTOE, with Olsson.



policies as the planning team uncovered opportunities while also communicating progress through social media and other outreach. The city used outcomes from this process to direct the spending of current street improvement funds while planning continued. The city also began to prepare for larger projects, such as the Searcy Sports Complex. Success was evident when residents passed a \$93.8 million facilities bond, a temporary half-cent sales tax and also a \$13 million recreation improvement bond in 2024.

The MySearcy Plan was recognized by the U.S. Department of Transportation when the city was awarded a \$4.6 million RAISE active transportation planning grant that also was prepared by Crafton Tull. Ultimately, the process produced a road map for the city's growth and is an example of how to let the community drive the planning process.

There were four Honor Awards. Those went to:

- Bridgefarmer & Associates for the BNSF Railroad Overpass for the Arkansas Department of Transportation and the City of Jonesboro.
- Garver for the Arkansas A-R-N-G BUILDER S-M-S Implementation for the Arkansas Army National Guard.
- Garver for the Springdale Citywide Transportation Study for the City of Springdale.
- Halfff for the Jonesboro Health Accelerator Plan for the City of Jonesboro.

Category C: Structural Systems, Large Project. The winner was Olsson for the West Avenue Parking Deck project for



CATEGORY C HONOR AWARD. Michael Baker International received the Honor Award in this category for the Big Creek Relief Bridges Project for the Arkansas Department of Transportation. Pictured from left are Michael Baker International's Hussam Saleem, Ph.D., P.E., S.E.; Stephane Bossio, P.E.; and Scott Thornberry, P.E.; ARDOT's Rick Ellis, P.E.; and Michael Baker International's Robert Darrington, P.E.; Amanda Furr, P.E., Erin Bowie, Landon Miller, P.E., and Travis Keymer, E.I.

the City of Fayetteville. The new six-level parking deck was a cornerstone project in the development of the city's cultural arts corridor, known as The Ramble, in Fayetteville's downtown entertainment district. Design of the Ramble prompted significant modifications to the downtown footprint. This included the removal of the entertainment district's largest public parking space.



CATEGORY C: STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS, LARGE PROJECT HONOR AWARD. Above, Halff received an Honor Award in this category for the Highway 102 Pedestrian Tunnel for the Bentonville/Bella Vista Trailblazers Association. Pictured from left are Halff's Bryan Maurer, P.E., Cynthia Roy, and James Arbuckle, P.E.

CATEGORY C: STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS, LARGE PROJECT HONOR AWARD. Below, Garver received the Honor Award in this category for the Highway 51 Overpass for the Arkansas Department of Transportation. Pictured from left are Adam Hall, P.E., Garver; Rick Ellis, P.E., ARDOT; and John Ruddell, P.E., and Dustin Tackett, P.E., Garver.



CATEGORY C: STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS, SMALL PROJECT. The winner was McClelland Consulting Engineers for the Maumelle Pickleball Complex project for the City of Maumelle. Pictured are MCE's Emily Duncan, Anna Claire Vocque, P.E., and Dan Beranek, P.E.



The deck's design had to fulfill multiple roles in addition to replacing parking convenient to the entertainment district. Olsson created a flexible multi-use design that features a six-story structure, with an option for a future seventh floor, that expanded parking from 290 to 335 spaces. The design incorporated retail and commercial spaces, a public art wall, and a first-floor police substation. There were also provisions that easily incorporate multi-use developments on upper levels.

The project presented challenges such as working within an extremely limited footprint to protect adjacent historical structures and businesses. As a joint public/private venture, Olsson successfully navigated the complexities of coordinating multiple involved parties.

There were four Honor Award recipients in this category. They were:

- Garver for the Highway 51 Overpass for the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

- Halff for the Highway 102 Pedestrian Tunnel for the Bentonville/Bella Vista Trailblazers Association.

- Burns & McDonnell for the Mercy Way Corridor Improvements for the City of Bella Vista.

- Michael Baker International for the Big Creek Relief Bridges Project for the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

Category C: Structural Systems, Small Project. The winner was McClelland Consulting Engineers for the Maumelle Pickleball Complex project for the City of Maumelle.

The complex is a prime example of how community-driven projects can transform underused spaces into valuable assets. Originally an abandoned, unsafe tennis court, this site was revitalized using COVID-19 relief funds to meet the community's demand for pickleball.

The project consisted of seven courts built with post-tensioned concrete to ensure durability and sustainability. Beyond

offering a new recreational space, the complex has had a profound impact on the community. Though the facility has only been open a short time, the city has already seen an impact from its construction. The pickleball complex opened on June 6, and in 36 hours Maumelle Parks sold more than 100 keys to access the facility.

The courts have become a prime location for social interaction and outdoor activity. Their proximity to the community center has drawn more visitors to the facility as well as the nearby aquatics center and skate park. These courts have sparked the interest of user groups of all ages, including young people whose schools have begun organizing leagues and tournaments. Overall, this project has increased outdoor recreation and raised awareness among residents of Maumelle of all the great facilities available to them.

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CATEGORY D: SURVEYING AND MAPPING TECHNOLOGY, LARGE PROJECT. The winner was B&F Engineering, a Division of Crafton Tull, for the Bull Shoals Area 48 Boundary Survey for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Pictured from left are James Montgomery, P.S., Jonathan Hamner, P.S., and Danny Boyett, P.S., all with B&F.



CATEGORY E: ENVIRONMENTAL The winner was Olsson for the Fayetteville Climate Action Plan for the City of Fayetteville. Pictured from left in the left photo are Justin Clay with the City of Fayetteville; and Eric Fuselier, PWS, ENV PP, and Aaron Ball, Olsson.

Category D: Surveying and Mapping Technology, Large Project. The winner in this category was B & F Engineering, a Division of Crafton Tull, for the Bull Shoals Area 48 Boundary Survey project for the Data & Geospatial Section of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Little Rock District.

The Bull Shoals Area 48 Survey established boundary lines based on the original surveys conducted nearly 200 years ago, when the land was still a U.S. territory and before the dam was built and the lake created. B & F Engineering, a Division of Crafton Tull, found historical errors in the original surveys, including a 300-foot discrepancy along the Arkansas/Missouri state line, using modern technology including GPS, robotic total stations, and GIS. Boundaries were marked or perpetuated through this rugged terrain, establishing the government fee take-line in Area 48 of Bull Shoals Lake. B & F Engineering's work was reviewed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, licensed professional surveyors from

Arkansas and Missouri, and a third-party surveying firm.

Results from this work support the Corps of Engineers' mission to protect the shoreline while balancing public and private interests. This project exemplifies the challenges and successes of the land surveying professionals who work to locate original evidence, including evidence from the 1800s, with the purpose of perpetuating these boundaries for future generations.

Category E: Environmental, Small Project. The winner was Olsson for the Fayetteville Climate Action Plan for the City of Fayetteville.

Olsson partnered with the City of Fayetteville to develop an innovative climate action plan addressing climate change challenges through both energy and nature-based solutions. Recognizing the need for proactive adaptation to altered rainfall patterns, extreme weather, and temperature shifts, the city sought to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen community resilience.

In 2018, Fayetteville initiated its energy action plan to tackle emissions, and by 2024 it expanded its vision to include nature-based goals. Olsson was entrusted with combining these efforts into a comprehensive plan. Olsson's approach emphasized that conservation and natural infrastructure can work in tandem with traditional engineering solutions to elevate sustainability.

A key component of Olsson's strategy was to assess ecosystem resilience by analyzing ecosystem services, carbon storage, and climate equity. This involved using geographic information system datasets from various sources, including the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, to create a climate resilience GIS. This tool is now available on the city's website to help guide planners and city leaders in evaluating public lands and ecosystems.

The resulting scoring matrix helps inform future policies and action strategies, providing a resilient ecosystem that can withstand environmental stressors effectively. This collaborative effort



CATEGORY G: WATER RESOURCES, LARGE PROJECT. The result was a tie. One of the winners was Crafton Tull for the Blossom Way Creek Restoration Project for the City of Rogers. Pictured from left are Lance Jobe, P.E., city of Rogers; and Garrett Lampson, P.E., and Matt Crafton, P.E., Crafton Tull.



CATEGORY G: WATER RESOURCES, LARGE PROJECT. The other winner in this category was Garver for the Marion Berry Pump Station Startup for the Bayou Meto Water Management System. Pictured from left are Daniel Hollinger with Garver and Edward Swaim, executive director of the Bayou Meto Water Management System.

demonstrates Olsson's commitment to providing skilled solutions to complex climate challenges.

Category G: Water Resources, Large Project. The result was a tie. One of the winners was Crafton Tull for the Blossom Way Creek Restoration project for the city of Rogers.

Blossom Way Creek in Rogers flows through heavily urbanized residential and commercial areas along I-49. Rapid land development along the riparian corridor led to a loss of vegetation and increased flows through the creek. A record flood in the spring of 2022 washed away large portions of the streambank, leaving a vertical edge eroded to within inches of the Razorback Greenway Trail.

The City of Rogers hired Crafton Tull to lead emergency efforts to stabilize the creek and protect the Greenway. This was followed by a larger project to restore 825 linear feet of stream channel and reconnect 1,800 linear feet of additional creek to its floodplain. The team used a natural channel design methodology to create an appropriately sized channel with a dense riparian buffer and in-stream structures

that deflect erosive forces from the banks and prevent down cutting.

The team navigated around an active bridge construction project on site and three other development projects nearby. What began as an emergency stabilization effort ended in a restored natural channel section in an urban center. The restoration of Blossom Way Creek safeguards community greenspace, removes homes from the floodplain, and provides essential stormwater management along a primary flood corridor.

The other winner in the category was Garver for the Marion Berry Pump Station Startup for the Bayou Meto Water Management District. Groundwater has been extensively used for irrigation in Arkansas for more than a century. In the 1920s, farmers noticed a decline in water levels in irrigation wells. In the 1950s, Congress authorized a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project to address this issue, which was re-authorized in the 1990s. The Marion Berry Pump Station, built in 2014, was designed to provide additional water by pumping from the Arkansas River to irrigate 300,000 acres of farmland

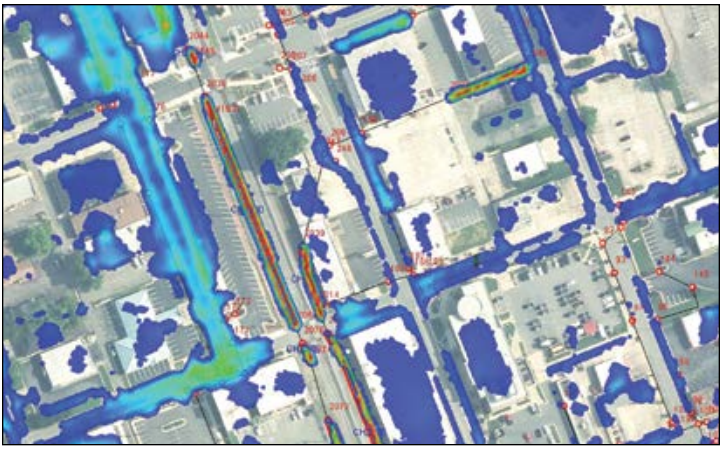
through 105 miles of canals, more than 100 re-lift pumps, and 2 million feet of pipeline. However, the largest irrigation pump station in Arkansas hadn't been operated since its construction.

To address the issue, Bayou Meto Water Management District tasked Garver with evaluating the station's condition. The team did a "brand new startup" of a massive pump station eight years after it was constructed. The records in the station and condition of the mechanical parts suggested the station had not been performance-tested at the time of construction. The team had to troubleshoot equipment it didn't install with no indication that it had ever been operated.

The team was able to successfully operate all six pumps in the station, and in one year was able to get two pumps completely operational. The entire station is well positioned to be ready for irrigation water delivery.

Category G: Water Resources. The Small Project Category winner was Garver for the Downtown Conway Drainage Study for the City of Conway.

Continues on page 28



CATEGORY G: WATER RESOURCES, SMALL PROJECT. The winner was Garver for the Downtown Conway Drainage Study for the City of Conway. Pictured from left are Richard Corby, P.E., Garver; Kurt Jones, P.E., City of Conway; and Garver's Mark Hammons, P.E., CFM; Kathryn McCoy, P.E., CFM, and Amanda Elmendorf, P.E., Garver.



CATEGORY H: TRANSPORTATION. The winners were Halff along with Garver, McClelland Consulting Engineers; HMMH; NVS Geospatial; and Terracon for the Fort Smith Regional Airport Runway 8-26 Extension. Pictured from left are Bryan Maurer, P.E., Halff; Michael Griffin, P.E., Fort Smith Regional Airport; and Curtis Osier, Halff.

The downtown Conway drainage study and conceptual design combined advanced hydrologic and hydraulic modeling with GIS technology to address recurring flood risks while economically preserving the area's historic character.

Through its support in securing state-level funding and the creation of an interactive GIS portal, Garver provided Conway with a comprehensive, adaptable solution for stormwater management that prioritizes public safety and economic growth.

This project also outlined unique funding opportunities for municipalities that are unaware of potential grants for flood studies. This experience can serve as a roadmap to implement innovative technology for stormwater management. The project set a high standard in municipal flood mitigation, reflecting Garver's commitment to engineering excellence and community-centered solutions.

Category H: Transportation, Large Project. The winner was Halff, along

with Garver, McClelland Consulting Engineers, HMMH, NV5 Geospatial, and Terracon. The firms won for the Fort Smith Regional Airport Runway 8 to 26 Extension for Fort Smith Regional Airport and Michael Griffin.

Fort Smith Regional Airport (Ebbing Field) was notified in 2021 that it was a finalist for the Foreign Military Sales Program Pilot Training Center. This includes F-16 and F-35 training missions for foreign countries.

The City of Fort Smith reached out to the Halff team to evaluate construction of a 1,300-foot extension to the current 8,000-foot Runway 8 to 26. The runway extension needed to be ready for operational startup by fall 2023.

The Halff team developed a detailed schedule to track individual progress for key project elements among many notable stakeholders. These efforts fast-tracked it to completion in just over two years, with final project delivery in September 2023.

The roles of the consulting engineers included Garver providing airfield design expertise and new approach development; McClelland providing Geotechnical Materials Testing; HMMH providing Noise Modeling; NV5 Geospatial providing AGIS Approach Changes; and Terracon providing Cultural Resource Surveys.

There were seven Honor Awards in the category. Those were:

- McClelland Consulting Engineers, Inc., for the Bentonville Water Tower Road Phase I Roundabout for the City of Bentonville.
- McClelland Consulting Engineers for the Texas Regional Airport Terminal Area Development for the Texarkana Regional Airport Authority.
- Garver for the Bryant Parkway for the City of Bryant.
- Garver for the Runway 18 to 36 Improvements project for the City of Bentonville.
- Crafton Tull for the Gator Boulevard Extension for the City of Bentonville.

CATEGORY H: TRANSPORTATION HONOR AWARD.

Michael Baker International received an Honor Award for the Jonesboro Municipal Airport Airfield Pavement Strengthening for the Jonesboro Municipal Airport Commission. Pictured are Michael Baker's Alan Caster, P.E., and Mike Stengel, P.E.



CATEGORY H: TRANSPORTATION HONOR AWARD. Garver received an Honor Award for the Bryant Parkway for the City of Bryant. From left are Bryant Director of Planning and Community Development Truett Smith; Richard Corbyn, P.E., Garver; Bryant Mayor Chris Treat; Bryant City Engineer Ted Taylor, P.E., and Bryant Public Works Director Tim Fournier.



CATEGORY I: SPECIAL PROJECTS, SMALL PROJECT. McClelland Consulting Engineers was the winner in this category for the Wildwood Daffodil Plaza for the Wildwood Park for the Arts. Pictured from left are Bruce Rentz, Wildwood Park; Dan Beranek, P.E., Emily Duncan and Anna Claire Vocque, P.E., McClelland Consulting Engineers; and Bevan Keating, Wildwood Park.

- Bridgefarmer & Associates for the BNSF Railroad Overpass for the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

- Michael Baker International for the Jonesboro Municipal Airport Airfield

Pavement Strengthening for the City of Jonesboro.

Category I: Special Projects: Small Project. The winner was McClelland Consulting Engineers for the Wildwood

Daffodil Plaza for the Wildwood Park for the Arts.

Wildwood Park for the Arts is a 105-acre park nestled in west Little Rock's

Continues on [page 30](#)

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CATEGORY J: SMALL PROJECTS, LARGE PROJECT. Garver was the winner in this category for the Peel Ferry Dock Improvements project for the Arkansas Department of Transportation. Pictured from left are Colton Wylie, P.E., Garver; Rick Ellis, P.E., ARDOT; and John Ruddell, P.E., and Adam Hall, P.E., Garver.



CATEGORY J: SMALL PROJECTS, SMALL PROJECT. McClelland Consulting Engineers was the winner in this category for the Ralph Bunche Amphitheater for the City of Benton. Pictured from left are Dan Beranek, P.E., and Ruxin Tao, McClelland Consulting Engineers; Junior Rodemeyer, City of Benton; and Caleb Zimmerman, P.E., McClelland Consulting Engineers.

Chenal Valley. Its mission as a non-profit is to provide opportunities for all ages to enjoy nature and the arts. Facilities on site such as the botanical gardens and theatre help to facilitate that mission.

The memorial plaza is located inside this thoughtfully designed park. Dedicated to Linda C. Smith, it blooms with the spirit of creativity and beauty. The plaza embodies her favorite flower, the daffodil, for which MCE designed an intricate paver layout. The design team carefully placed the plaza to preserve the established woodland and minimize its footprint on the land, protecting the natural surroundings.

The vibrant landscape overlooks Swan Lake, creating a serene backdrop. Come spring, a stunning display of daffodils bursts into color, crafting a breathtaking tribute to a woman whose passion for the arts touched so many. The plaza both celebrates Smith's legacy and also invites all who enter the plaza to pause, reflect, and find inspiration in the harmonious blend

of nature and artistry that she deeply cherished.

Category J: Small Projects. This category involves projects whose total construction budget does not exceed \$25 million. The **Large Project** category winner was Garver for the Peel Ferry Dock Improvements for the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

As part of an on-call contract, Garver provided professional services to improve the Peel Ferry dock facilities. The ferry's existing dock structures were no longer in optimal condition. The floating barges developed leaks increasing the need for maintenance, and the ramps had deteriorated over time due to age, use, and exposure to wet conditions.

Concerned with the dock's structural deterioration, ARDOT selected Garver to tackle this unique project, given its specialized experience with ports and harbors in the state. Work included project management, structural design, and lighting design services to replace the

existing barges and design the ramp segments. Garver replaced the existing set of floating barges with pre-manufactured segmental barges featuring unique customization consisting of handrails, two solar-powered lights, manual winches, and deck cleats.

Garver's design also included wider ramps to accommodate heavy loads and steel grid decks with durable, weather-resistant materials. Garver utilized galvanized steel to withstand fluctuating water levels and harsh weather as well as cathodic protection to prevent corrosion on metal surfaces. Through this project, Garver exemplified its ability to develop long-term transportation solutions that benefit the public.

There was one Honor Award in this category: Olsson for the University of Arkansas Parking Lot 56-B for the University of Arkansas.

The **Category J: Small Projects: Small Project** winner was McClelland Consulting Engineers for the Ralph Bunche

Amphitheater for the City of Benton. MCE was instrumental in developing Benton's Ralph Bunche Park Amphitheater, beginning with its initial concept as part of the city's 2020-40 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Hired in 2022, MCE conducted topographic surveys and geotechnical investigations, and it provided design and construction observation/administration.

These services guided critical modifications to the original design. These included a five-tiered seating arrangement of concrete and artificial turf accommodating up to 150 people, including ADA-compliant spaces. The project addressed drainage and erosion through integrated systems, improved hillside stability, and native landscaping. Site design emphasized community integration, as Ralph Bunche Park serves a historically African American community.

The amphitheater's addition encourages social connection and cultural celebration, supporting events like Juneteenth and Black History Month, and providing



BRAD HAMMOND, P.E., of Olsson once again served as master of ceremonies.

a performance venue for diverse acts. It also will link to the Arkansas Southwest Trail and the Benton Bike Park, enhancing local recreation and economic growth. MCE collaborated with Wagner

General Contractors and project manager Dakota Ellis, ensuring precise execution. The amphitheater not only met but exceeded city expectations, coming in under budget and enriching the community both culturally and economically as a sustainable, functional, and socially significant space.

The event included a recognition of the ACEC/A members of the College of Fellows. Those include Dan Williams, P.E.; Bert Parker; Rick Geraci, P.E.; Jeff Geurian, P.E.; Dennis Ford, P.E.; Matt Crafton, P.E.; and the late Carl Yates and Brock Johnson.

Sean McCone represented the National ACEC executive committee as the 2024-26 ACEC vice chair for the Southeast Region. McCone is an executive vice president and board member at Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson.

Event sponsors included Crist Engineers, Crafton Tull, Garver, Halff, McClelland Consulting Engineers, and nu marketing. UES sponsored the table centerpieces.



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Sustainable solutions for Arkansas water

Garver's dedicated team of experts is tackling water challenges in Arkansas and across the country with projects like the ACEC Engineering Excellence Award-winning Bayou Meto Water District's Marion Berry Pump Station. When completed, it will provide critical surface water to farmers, supporting the state's agriculture. It's a vital step toward safeguarding water accessibility for future generations and protecting our most valuable resource.