

# THE FIRST WORD

May, 2006

## ACEC Midwest States Conference Set for June 1-3 in Branson

Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas & Kansas Join Together of a ROCKIN' GOOD TIME!!!!

The ACEC Midwest State Conference, comprising the annual meetings of ACEC OKLAHOMA, Missouri, Arkansas, and Kansas, will be held June 1-3, 2005 at the Chateau on the Lake in Branson, MO.

The Conference will feature a variety of educational programs, mixed with social events and the annual golf tournament.

The Conference will kickoff Thursday evening with the Welcoming Reception where you will be able to reacquaint yourself with your friends from around the midwest.

Friday morning will start with a breakfast presentation by **FEMA Region VII Director Dick Hainje**, who will present a program on Emergency Preparedness in the Midwest.

Following breakfast, each of the four states will breakout for their individual Annual Meetings. ACEC OKLAHOMA will conduct our regular annual business including consideration of the annual budget, a variety of annual reports, and the election of the 2006-07 Officers and Directors of ACEC OKLAHOMA.

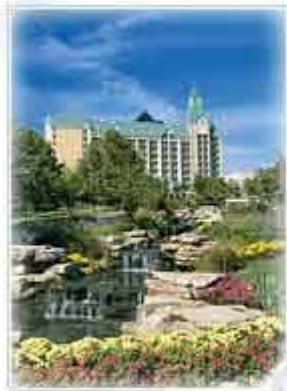
Friday afternoon will be dedicated to continuing education with three one-hour seminars:

\* **Driving Principals, Ethics and "What Would Your Mother Say?"** Presented by Thomas Bonggi & Robert Garcia of The Insurance Exchange, the program will discuss the Roles, Rules, and Duties (Defined, Perceived and Assumed) of Design Professionals.

\* **The Future of MicroStation & AutoCad.** Learn what's in store for your firm by looking into the future of MicroStation and AutoCad with experts who are in a position to know.

\* **ACEC Business Insurance Trust Jeopardy!** Jeff Connelly of the ACEC Business Insurance Trust will help you increase your knowledge and understanding of the property and casualty coverages provided through the ACEC Business Insurance Trust.

Friday night will be a ROCKIN' GOOD TIME as we head to the newly opened **Dick Clark's American Bandstand Theater**. After dinner, we'll step back to the days of bobbie socks and saddle shoes with **The Original Stars of American Bandstand, featuring Fabian & Bobby Vee!**



These two 50's musical icons will be joined by **The Chiffons, Brian Hyland and Chris Montez**.

Hear the original voices of 21 top ten hits and over 50 top 40 hits including: "Take Good Care of My Baby," "The Night Has a 1000 Eyes," "Rubber Ball," "One Fine Day," "He's So Fine," "Like a Tiger," "Turn Me Loose," "Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini," "Gypsy Woman," "Sealed With a Kiss," "Earth Angel," "Let's Dance," "The More I See You," and many more.

These legendary rock stars will take you on a breathless journey down memory lane that you won't want to miss!!!!

## ACEC 4-State Conference June 1-3 in Branson

(Cont. from Page 1)

Saturday morning's breakfast program will feature a presentation on the brand new **BRANSON LANDING** development of the Tannycomo Lake front, one of the nation's most attractive and dynamic mixed-use projects. Situated between US Route 65 and Lake Taneycomo in the city of Branson, Missouri, this \$300 million master-planned project offers the only lifestyle retail, restaurant and waterfront entertainment district in the region. The site occupies 95 acres including 1.5 miles of waterfront and is walking distance from the edge of the Branson tourism district anchored by Bass Pro Shop and Belk Department Store along with a 220,000 square foot Branson Convention Center, 4-star 260-room convention hotel, a 100-room boutique hotel, 140 waterfront luxury condominiums, pent-houses and a marina.

The rest of Saturday morning will center on Roundtable discussions of a variety of Human Resource issues, many of which have been the focus of recent surveys sent to ACEC OKLAHOMA members and members in the other states. These surveys and roundtables will assist you in "benchmarking" your firm's benefit package and help you find out if your firm is in the "competitive range."

The afternoon will be free for you to enjoy the Branson area or to play in the annual 4-State Golf Tournament at the Pointe Royale Golf Course.

The Conference will conclude with the annual Officers/Directors Installation Banquet.

Attendees can earn up to 7 Professional Development Hours during the conference. A PDH form will be available at the Conference for your records.

Registration for members is \$270.00 and \$160.00 for spouses/guests if you register before May 19th.

**AND REMEMBER** ..... Reservation deadline for the hotel room block is **May 7th!!!!** After that date, rooms will be available on a first come/first serve basis only. Call the Chateau at 888-333-5253 and ask for the ACEC Midwest States Conference rate of \$159.00.

This is going to be an outstanding conference, with a great mix of educational and social opportunities. If you have any questions, call the ACEC OKLAHOMA office.

We look forward to seeing you June 1-3 in Branson!!!!

## Nominating Committee Sets 2006-07 Slate of Officers

The 2006-07 ACEC OKLAHOMA Nominating Committee, comprised of Committee Chairman Don Vick, Mike Homan, and Mike Arand, submitted the following nominations for the 2006-07 ACEC OKLAHOMA Board of Directors at the April 13th ACEC OKLAHOMA General Membership Meeting:

**Chairman Elect – Darold Davis**

Garver Engineers, Tulsa

**Vice Chairman of Membership – Steve Ford**

Zahl-Ford, Inc., Oklahoma City

**Treasurer – Tom Hendrick**

Wallace Engineering, Tulsa

**Vice Chairman of Bus. Practice – Jim Benson**

Poe & Associates, Oklahoma City

**Vice Chairman of Educ/P.R. – Stacy Loeffler**

BKL, Inc., Tulsa

Nominating Chairman Vick reported that the position of ACEC National Director was also open this year as Mike Arand was completing his three-year term. The Nominating Committee talked with both Mike Homan and Jerry Farrar, and both are willing to serve as ACEC National Director. The Committee reported that a final decision on the nominee would be made in the near future.

The Committee also noted that by virtue of being Chairman-Elect for the past year, Jim Stewart would automatically become Chairman of the Board for 2006-07.

Election of Officers will take place during the Annual Meeting of the Council on June 2nd in Branson. Members not attending the Convention will be provided the opportunity to vote by mail prior to the Convention.

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## Official Notice Of ACEC OKLAHOMA Annual Meeting

As required by the ACEC OKLAHOMA By-Laws, this shall serve as official notice of the Annual Meeting of the Council, scheduled for 9:00am, Friday, June 2, 2006 at the Chateau on the Lake in Branson, MO.

The 2006-07 ACEC OKLAHOMA Annual Budget will be presented for consideration and approval, annual reports will be presented, and election of officers for the 2006-07 year will be conducted, along with other business.

All members are urged to attend.

## Legislative Session Enters Finals Weeks

With the Constitutional mandated adjournment of 5:00pm on the last Friday of May (May 26th this year) looming on the not too distant horizon, the 2006 Legislature is grinding toward the inevitable adjournment at less-than breakneck speed.

The waning days of any session is made up of partisan rhetoric and election posturing. And this year that may be more true than in years past considering what is "at stake" for both houses of the Legislature as well as both political parties.

With a Republican House and Democratic Senate, both sides seem determined to send legislation to the other side which they know full well the opposite house will kill.

Both sides are posturing for the upcoming elections in the fall when the Republicans will be trying to maintain their majority in the House while the Democrats fight to keep from losing control of the Senate for the first time in state history. Add to that several "term limited" members who are running for higher office -- against each other in some cases -- and an incumbent Governor who is seeking re-election, and the political dynamics for the last three weeks of the session will be very interesting.

With the session drawing to a close, ACEC OKLAHOMA still has a few bills/issues which we are watching closely. And, we are happy to report one bill which was a direct attack on the engineering profession has died for the session. Here's a wrap-up of the issues:

**HIGHWAY FINANCE – HB 2940, by Rep. Mark Liotta, R-Tulsa, and Sen. Frank Shurden, D-Henryetta**, is the main bill to provide additional funding to both the state and counties. The bill is in a House/Senate Conference Committee, and that's where all of the final decisions will be made. (SEE RELATED STORY ON PAGE 4)

**PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE – HB 2530, by Rep. Doug Miller, R-Norman and Sen. Cliff Branam, R-Oklahoma City**, was requested by The State Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors making amendments to last year's rewrite. ACEC OKLAHOMA is following this closely and supports the amendments. The bill has passed both the House and Senate and was signed by the Governor.

**USE OF THE TERM "ENGINEER" BY NON-LICENSED ENTITIES – SB 1881, by Sen. Charlie Laster, D-Shawnee and Rep. Shane Jett, R-Tecumseh**,

exempts from state regulation the use of the term "engineer" in the name of any manufacturing company that does not engage in the practice of engineering.

ACEC OKLAHOMA opposed any dilution in the protection of the use of the term "engineer" and believes that only properly licensed individuals and companies should be able to use the terminology.

Even though the bill passed the Senate and House Committee, the House failed to consider the bill prior to the April 27th "opposite house" deadline! Therefore, the bill is **DEAD** for the session!!!! This is great news, and ACEC OKLAHOMA is pleased that the public's safety, health and welfare has been protected by not allowing the use of the term "engineer" by non-licensed individuals and/or entities.

**QUALIFICATIONS-BASED SELECTION – SB0558, by Sen. Frank Shurden, D-Henryetta and Rep. Mark Liotta, R-Tulsa**, was requested by the Department of Central Service's Construction and Properties Division to make changes in both the State Consultants Act (QBS) and the Competitive Bidding Act. The bill passed the House and Senate, and is in Conference Committee.

**ARCHITECT'S ACT – SB1991, by Sen. Mike Morgan, D-Stillwater and Rep. Mike Wilt, R-Bartlesville**. This bill addresses two long-standing issues concerning the State Architectural Act as well as with the licensure of Interior Designers. The bill is in a House/Senate Conference Committee, and all indications are that agreements have been reached which will allow this bill to be passed and the issue resolved.

**TORT REFORM** - Prompted by Senate Democrats rejection of comprehensive lawsuit reform this year, House leaders last week passed a renewed reform proposal. **Senate Bill 1657** would cap non-economic damages at \$300,000 while also allowing full recovery of actual damages, such as medical expenses and lost income. The bill also reforms **"joint and several liability"** so defendants are liable only for their share of harm – if someone is found to be 10 percent liable, they will pay 10 percent of the plaintiff's award.

Tort Reform is one of the "lightning rod" issues still remaining this session, and it's anyone's guess as to what will be the final outcome.

That's the report for now! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give us a call.

## Highway Finance Legislation at Critical Junction

### Call/Write/Fax Your State Senator Today!!!!

As the 2006 Legislative Session enters its last 3 weeks, the TRUST Coalition (Transportation Revenues Used Strictly for Transportation), of which ACEC OKLAHOMA is a member, is beginning the final push to secure permanent, dedicated funding investments for Oklahoma's roads and bridges.

Beginning on May 8th, TRUST will start a statewide media campaign urging the Legislature to act, and act NOW on House Bill 2940.

HB 2940 would raise the annual appropriation to ODOT from current \$35 million to \$50 million per year, and would annualize the \$70 million debt service on the bond issue from the 1990's. After those bonds are paid off, the \$70 million would remain in ODOT's budget and could be used for construction and maintenance.

Additionally, 15% of the current title/tag/tax fees on motor vehicles that goes to the state General Revenue Fund would be redirected to the County Bridge & Road Fund to address the needs of the county system.

The House is fully onboard with the provisions of HB 2940, but the Senate is yet to be convinced, so the media campaign will focus on gaining bipartisan support of HB 2940 in the Senate.

In addition to the media campaign, a strong GRASSROOTS campaign has been developed, and that is where YOU come in.

ACEC OKLAHOMA members are urged to call, write, and/or fax their State Senator urging them to move HB 2940 forward as quickly as possible! The more that Senators hear from their constituents, the greater the possibility that they will act.

**Contacting every Senator is critical!!!!** If the "rank and file" members get enough pressure from their constituents, they, in turn, will start pressuring their Leadership to take action.

The key messages we are trying to get to the Senators are:

- \* Roads & Bridges should be funded as a PRIORITY from a DEDICATED funding source.

- \* You're tired of wasteful spending of motor vehicle fees and gas tax on General Fund spending. Motor vehicle fees should be spent on ROADS & BRIDGES!!!!

- \* Counties are also struggling to maintain their road and bridge system, so the 15% increase for counties is a critical piece of the funding package.



- \* Due to the robust economy, the Legislature has more money to spend this year than ever in the history of the State. The 2006 Legislature has the perfect opportunity THIS YEAR to solve the road and bridge crisis in Oklahoma!

Securing passage of HB 2940 will not be easy. There are a number of other issues which will have direct impact on the success or failure of HB 2940 -- Overall State Budget, Teacher and State Employee Pay Raises, Tax Cuts, and others. The House and Senate are far apart in the current budget negotiations. On one hand, the House wants major tax cuts enacted before deciding on the final budget, while the Senate wants to finalize the budget to see how much is left, if any, for tax cuts, i.e. -- cut taxes and spend the balance vs. spend everything necessary and see what's left over for tax cuts.

Caught in the middle of this philosophical disagreement is highway finance.

Some Senators are already asking how much of the tax cuts we (highway finance advocates) are willing to give up for increased funding. And, of course, the Education Lobby is going to say that any attempt to redirect General Revenue Funds is taking money away from the children.

When you talk to your Senators, remind them that you are advocates for education, since your firms future and the future of the engineering profession rely on a well-educated workforce. Also, with regards to the "tax cut" issue, remind them that you are for PERMANENT, DEDICATED funding investments in Oklahoma's transportation infrastructure from existing and growth revenues, and that the "tax cut" issue is not ours to fight.

ACEC OKLAHOMA and TRUST ask for your support and immediate action. Call your State Senator today!!! For more information either call ACEC OKLAHOMA, or visit the TRUST website at [www.RestoreTrust.org](http://www.RestoreTrust.org).