

THE FIRST WORD

September, 2007

2007 Engineering Excellence Awards

ACEC OKLAHOMA announces the 2007 Engineering Excellence Awards Program by this Call for Entries. All member firms are encouraged to enter the competition which is a prelude to the ACEC National Engineering Excellence competition.

ACEC OKLAHOMA's Engineering Excellence competition includes 5 awards: (1) The Grand Oklahoma Conceptor and four (4) Oklahoma Honor Awards. The five (5) winning Entries are eligible to be submitted to the ACEC national EEA Program. Deadline for submission to ACEC is **January 11, 2008**, with the judging taking place in February, 2008. The ACEC Awards Presentation will be Tuesday, April 29, 2007, in Washington DC at which ALL ENTRIES will be displayed.

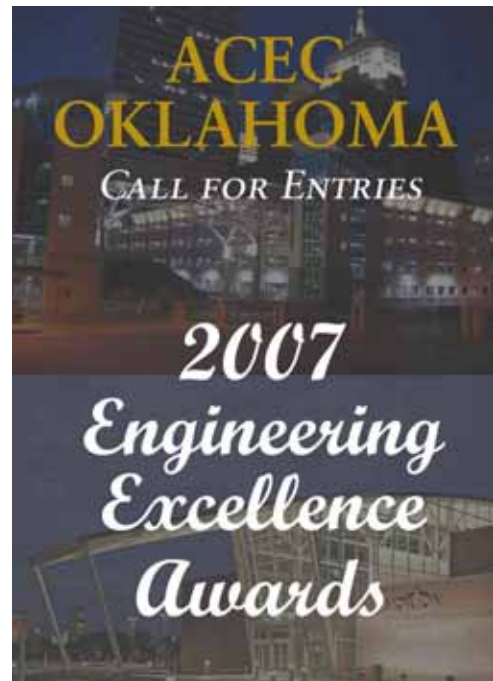
The timetable for the Oklahoma Program is:

- * **November 9, 2007 - Deadline for receipt of entries**

- * **Week of November 12, 2007 - Judging** by a panel of judges selected from business, government, and/or education leaders in Oklahoma

- ** **The five winning firms will be notified immediately following the judging to allow the firms to finalize their submissions to the ACEC competition.**

- * **January 24, 2008 - Announcement of OKLAHOMA WINNERS** at a special ACEC OKLAHOMA meeting and Awards Luncheon with winning Firms and their Clients as Special Guests.



CRITERIA FOR ENTRY:

1. The Criteria and Requirements from the ACEC Engineering Excellence Awards Program will generally be followed for the Oklahoma Program, as outlined in the ACEC "Call for Entries" bulletin. Call ACEC OKLAHOMA for the "Call for Entries" brochure or go to the ACEC website at http://www.acec.org/awards/2008_brochure.pdf

2. Projects entered in the competition must have been substantially completed and ready for use between **November 1, 2005 and October 31, 2007**.

For more information, the ACEC OKLAHOMA "Call for Entries" is available at <http://www.acecok.org>, or you can call ACEC OKLAHOMA at 405-525-7696

ACEC Life/Health Trust Switches to United HealthCare

Effective August 1st, the ACEC Life/Health Trust switched carriers for the Trust's Life, Health, Disability, Dental and other insurance lines to United HealthCare, replacing Trustmark/HealthPlan Services.

David and Brandon Bartee of Diversified Benefits in Tulsa have been brokers for the ACEC Life/Health program for several years, and are continuing under the new United HealthCare program. In the weeks leading up to the August 1st transition, they have been working closely with several ACEC OKLAHOMA member firms assisting those firms with the changeover.

Below is an "Open Letter" to all ACEC OKLAHOMA firms from David Bartee.

If you have any questions about the ACEC Life/Health program, we urge you to contact either David or Brandon at (918) 742-2565.

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**To: All ACEC Life and Health Trust Members
All ACEC OKLAHOMA Members**

By now you should all be aware of the transition of the ACEC Life and Health Trust Plan from Trustmark/Health Plan Services to United Health Care effective August 1st, 2007.

You have not been billed for your new coverage from United Health Care but we have been notified those billings will start coming out by the end of this week and throughout the week following Labor Day.

If you have any problems dealing with United Health Care concerning your billing, your enrollment, your network or anything else, please be aware we are available to assist you.

We have been the exclusive ACEC Life and Health Trust broker in Oklahoma since July 2003. We have experience working with the old plan at Health Plan Services as well as experience with United Health Care prior to the new transition. Our role is to help you make the transition as smoothly as possible and to help you with any problems that might arise.

If you are not currently a part of the ACEC Life and Health Trust and would be interested in seeing the new product for you from United Health Care, we are available to help you too. Rumor has it the ACEC rates from United Health Care will be lower than the same plan you could get from them "on the street".

Please feel free to contact us with any problems with the transition of your current plan or if you are interested in a proposal for your company.

State Board To Hold Public Hearing Regarding Electronic Signatures

For several years, the Rules of the State Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors have allowed for an "electronically digitized seal" to be placed on plans in lieu of a "stamped" or "crimped" seal.

At the time the "electronically digitized seal" was allowed there was also discussion of allowing an "electronic signature" in lieu of the traditional "wet" original signature and date.

However, at that time, the technology and security of an "electronic signature" was suspect, and ACEC OKLAHOMA as well as the vast majority of the profession opposed allowing electronic signatures.

Over the years, technology and security have improved to the point where nearly 50% of states nationwide allow the use of the electronic signature.

To determine the level of interest in Oklahoma as well as to get input from the profession on whether or not it is time to allow for this in Oklahoma, the State Board of Licensure will hold a **PUBLIC HEARING** on **Friday, September 7th**.

The hearing will be held at the Oklahoma Engineering Center beginning at 2:00pm that afternoon. The Board will discuss the issues surrounding the use of electronic signatures, the current state of technology, and the security issues which the profession must address.

All ACEC OKLAHOMA members are encouraged to attend the Public Hearing, and to voice their opinion regarding the possibility of allowing "electronic signatures" in Oklahoma.

ACEC OKLAHOMA Office Closed Last Week of September

The ACEC OKLAHOMA Office will be closed September 24rd thru September 28th, as that is the week of the ACEC Fall Conference in Maui, Hawaii..

I will be calling in for messages and returning calls daily (please remember that there's a 6 hour time difference), and will be checking my e-mail regularly.

If for any reason you need to contact me, please leave a voice-mail (405-525-7696) or send an e-mail (jsullins@acecok.org).

Are Turnover Rates Higher in Large Firms?

This is actually true! According to [PSMJ's Staff and State Report](#), larger firms continue to experience higher turnover rates. A/E and full-service (A/E/P/I) firms, along with those operating in the Western region, report the highest rates. Full-service firms have reported high turnover rates over the past several years. Firms supporting the housing and commercial (developers) markets indicate the highest overall turnover rates by client sector. How does your firm compare to your competitors in these peer groups?

[PSMJ's Staff and State Report](#) also reports that net revenues per direct labor hour were highest in Alaska, Maine and Oklahoma — lowest in West Virginia. With respect to operating overhead, before incentive bonus/taxes, design firms in Pennsylvania and West Virginia report the highest rates — lowest in Rhode Island. Finally, design firm's backlogs improved 21% in Delaware but only 5% in Rhode Island. As with most state-by-state data, there usually is a wide variation between the individual states as well as between the median and mean performance benchmarks.

[PSMJ's Staff and State Report](#) also provides:

- Key staff benchmarks that help your management team identify where you need to improve in your recruitment and retention efforts.
- An analysis of how you stack up against your peers on key expense items related to staffing – helping you save tens of thousands in the process.
- An assessment of which types of firms are growing at the highest rate and which market segments are paying the highest compensation per staff to ensure your staffing policies are meeting the challenges you face every day.
- A comparison of your overhead rates and other vital benchmarks against other firms in your specific state. This provides the rationale you need to make necessary changes in how you manage your firm and beat your local competitors.

Get [PSMJ's A/E Staff and State Report](#) today. Mention Brochure Code **353025** when ordering and get the special report *Attracting and Retaining Outstanding People for Your A/E/C Firm*— a \$47 value – **FREE**.

To order [PSMJ's A/E Staff and State Report](#), call (800) 537-PSMJ (7765), fax (617) 965-5152, email customerservice@psmj.com, or visit our Web site at <http://www.psmj.com/publication/?id=125>

2007-08 Meeting/Seminar Calendar

Below is ACEC OKLAHOMA's Meetings/Seminar calendar for 2007-08. Additional seminars and webinars will be scheduled later this year, but these are the program dates as we currently have them.

Please mark your calendars for these important meetings and educational opportunities.

WEBINAR - Developing & Implementing Business Strategies for Engineers, Architects & Construction Companies

Tuesday, October 2, 2007
Oklahoma City & Tulsa

ODOT/ACEC OKLAHOMA Partnering Conference

Thursday, April 24, 2008
Meridian Conference Center
Oklahoma City, OK

WEBINAR - Project Life Cycle Cost Estimation Methods

Wednesday, October 24, 2007
Oklahoma City & Tulsa

ACEC Annual Convention

April 27-30, 2008
Washington, DC

SEMINAR - Financial Trends in the Design Profession

Instructor - Bill Fanning, PSMJ
Thursday, November 1, 2007
Oklahoma Engineering Center
Oklahoma City

ACEC Midwest States Joint Annual Convention

June 12-14, 2008
Branson, MO

Welcome New Member

Brion Consulting & Engineering, PLLC is ACEC OKLAHOMA's newest member firm.

Brion Bannister is the principal of the Civil Engineering firm which is located in Edmond.

Brion has been active in ACEC OKLAHOMA for several years through his previous firm, and we look forward to having Brion continue as an active member of ACEC OKLAHOMA.

Congratulations to Brion on his new endeavor!!!!

ACEC OKLAHOMA Board & General Membership Meeting (Lunch)

9:00am Board Meeting
11:45am General Meeting & Luncheon
Wednesday, November 14, 2007
Tulsa

Glen Boyd Appointed by Governor Henry

Glen Boyd, owner of Glen E. Boyd Engineering of Oklahoma City has been appointed by Governor Brad Henry to Oklahoma Construction Industries Board, which licenses Plumbing, Mechanical and Electrical Contractors in Oklahoma.

Boyd was confirmed to the appointive position by the Oklahoma State Senate near the end of the 2007 Session.

ACEC OKLAHOMA congratulates Glen on his appointment!

ACEC OKLAHOMA Board & General Membership Meeting (Dinner)

2:00pm Board Meeting
5:00pm General Meeting & Dinner
Thursday, January 24, 2008
Oklahoma City

ACEC OKLAHOMA Board & General Membership Meeting (Dinner)

2:00pm Board Meeting
5:00pm General Meeting & Dinner
Thursday, April 17, 2008
Tulsa