

THE FIRST WORD

October, 2017

Leadership For Engineers

ACEC OKLAHOMA's 2018 "Leadership For Engineers" is set to begin in February, and all member firms have received registration information.

The class is limited to 15 individuals, and to date we already have 12 individuals registered.

So, only 3 seats remain available.

If you have a candidate for the class and have not yet sent in the Nomination form, don't delay! We expect the remaining 3 seats to fill quickly.

Registration information can be found on our website:
www.acecok.org

ODOT/ACEC OKLAHOMA Partnering Steering Committee Update

The ODOT/ACEC OKLAHOMA Partnering Steering Committee met on Friday, September 22nd, and discussed a variety of topics.

ODOT Deputy Director/CFO Russell Hulin provided an overview of recent meetings with Legislative Leadership and possible funding issues during the Special Session. Hulin reported that ODOT stands to lose around \$5 million if the Legislature decided on "across-the-board" cuts during the Special Session.

He also provided an overview of an Interim Study dealing with "off-the-top" money, which is how ODOT receives the ROADS Fund money. Some legislators want to end this practice and revert back to "annual" appropriations ODOT and all agencies. This would be very detrimental to ODOT as it relies on consistent, reoccurring revenue to develop and implement the 8-Year Plan and other programs.

Other issues discussed included upcoming solicitations; the new 8-Year Plan to be presented to the Commission at their October meeting; the ProjectWise program; DBE goals; and the likely reduction in engineering contracts due to funding issues which have led to a reduction in total projects in the 8-Year Plan.

Legislative Update

Special Session in Limbo

Interim Study on ODOT Hiring of Consultants Set For Tuesday

The Special Session of the Oklahoma Legislature to deal with the Budget Shortfall following the Supreme Court's ruling of the "cigarette fee" being unconstitutional, started Monday, September 25th.

After two days of procedural work dictated by both the Legislature's own rules and the Oklahoma Constitution, the Session came to a halt with a resounding "thud" on Wednesday when the House Republicans and Democrats could not reach an agreement on the proposed \$1.50 Cigarette Tax.

Negotiations apparently are still ongoing between the House, Senate, and the Governor, but the Special Session stands in Recess until an agreement can be reached to which both the Majority and Minority party's can agree.

The Senate Transportation Committee will meet Tuesday, October 3rd at 1:00pm in Room 230 to discuss in Interim Study regarding the use of Consultants by ODOT and OTA.

As you will remember, Senator Mark Allen has introduced legislation the past two sessions which would impose a moratorium on ODOT hiring consulting engineers for a two year period which ACEC OKLAHOMA has strongly opposed.

Rather than pursue the bill this past spring, Senator Allen decided to request an Interim Study on the question. Transportation Secretary Mike Patterson and OTA Executive Director Tim Gatz are scheduled to address the Committee to discuss, "consulting engineers and the quality of projects."

This is an "open" meeting, so feel free to attending if your schedule allows! ACEC OKLAHOMA will be there, and we will be ready to address the Committee on behalf of the consulting engineering community should it be necessary and/or the opportunity arise.

We'll keep you updated on both the Special Session and the Interim Study!

President's Monthly Update

October, 2017

David Raymond, President & CEO

The tax reform proposal released this week by the White House and Congressional leaders would cut tax rates for both C corporations and pass-through businesses (such as S corporations and partnerships) – an approach ACEC has promoted with the Administration and Congress. We will continue to work on this and other reforms in the coming weeks as the House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee develop specific legislation. In just a few weeks, we've got another great Fall Conference, with registered attendance already over 800. I look forward to seeing all of you in Orlando!

General

- Congressional and Administration officials released a joint tax reform framework that would cut tax rates to 20 percent for C corporations, 25 percent for pass-through businesses such as S corps and partnerships, and 35 percent for individuals (see September 27 *Last Word* for details).
- ACEC President/CEO Dave Raymond joined Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam and other speakers in addressing over 500 attendees at the annual conference of ACEC/Tennessee which celebrated the recently passed "IMPROVE Act" for funding transportation infrastructure; ACEC staff were also active in Kansas, Rhode Island and Michigan in support of MO programs.
- ACEC Chairman Satch Pecori is leading an American delegation to the FIDIC meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia this week for the purpose of strengthening FIDIC's ability to promote QBS and other best practices on a global scale.
- International Committee member and Chair-elect Manish Kothari promoted QBS with South Asian procurement officials at a meeting at the U.S. Department of Commerce; separately ACEC staff met with Canadian government officials in Ottawa to discuss the merits of QBS.
- ACEC-sponsored language in the House omnibus appropriations report urges the U.S. Agency for International Development to expand its use of U.S. engineers in foreign aid work.
- ACEC and other industry allies were successful in keeping language out of the Senate version of the National Defense Authorization Act that would have reinstated the full "Blacklisting" rule that would have required firms to report alleged and unproven violations of federal labor rules.
- The annual ACEC-AASHTO Joint Committee meeting focused on improving coordination between State DOT program managers and their auditors on firm cost allocations and accounting; strategies for promoting innovation; streamlined environmental reviews and regulatory approvals.

Government Advocacy

- Submitted initial comments and recommendations to the Department of Labor on overtime pay under the Fair Labor Standards Act; ACEC seeks to limit the increase in the salary threshold below which employees who work more than 40 hours in a week must be paid overtime.
- Joined other business associations in asking Congress to approve a Budget Resolution as a first step towards tax reform.
- ACEC's Superfund Working Group met with James Woolford, Director of the EPA Superfund Program and Dana Stalcup, Deputy Director, to discuss program changes including accelerated clean-ups recommended by ACEC.

Business Resources

- The previously sold-out *"Can I Borrow Your Watch?" A Beginner's Guide to Succeeding in a Professional Consulting Organization*, is back in stock and available at <http://bit.do/acec-yourwatch>.
- Released updated *CASE Tool 10-1: Site Visit Cards*, and *Project Interviewing Skills for Land Development Firms*; CAMEE published *Electronic Document Release* – all available at www.acec.org/bookstore.

