



Past President's Message



Dear ASCE Northwest Branch Members:

It's once again that time of year during which very few of us have not a minute to spare for reading the Northwest Branch ASCE Newsletter. Before you put this down and return to your actual duties as engineers **PLEASE READ!**

I've written messages here in the past few newsletters regarding our commitment to the profession and that it absolutely extends beyond what's required of us by our places of employment. Our free time is limited and must certainly always be focused effectively. As such, think about how you can use the knowledge you've acquired throughout your formal education or career and ask how you can change the life of a young learner. Take the time to engender interest in careers related to our profession. We all have the power to foster an interest in the engineering fields of study and for those who may not have interest in engineering, the construction trades offer an equally fulfilling, challenging, and critically important career path.

According to the AGC, 86 percent of contractors in the United States say they are having difficulty filling hourly craft or salaried positions. With our country's aging workforce and millions of 'baby boomers' moving toward the retirement age, we need to prepare for the impending skilled worker shortage. Recently, I had the opportunity to meet with representatives from Western Technical College in La Crosse. Having undergone significant investments in their infrastructure over the last 5 years, they recognize the need to train individuals and shore up the skills gap which not only face the 7 Rivers Economic region, but to the larger extent across the country. An issue we discussed, however, is the fact that trade school enrollment has either plateaued or is on the decline. The Economist Magazine supported this finding with an article a few weeks ago, which in summary stated the United States is not replacing its skilled trade workforce at the same rate at which it's retiring or leaving for another profession altogether. Couple this problem with the fact that our infrastructure was recently given a D+ rating by American Society of Civil Engineers and it quickly becomes apparent that we've reached an inflection point problem.

So what can we do? A lot. Talk to kids and young adults about the opportunities that exist not only in the engineering fields but through the trades. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math or STEM education at a young age is a great way to encourage interest in what we do in our diversified fields of work. Not only as individuals who rely on a sound infrastructure but as engineers who uniquely recognize the consequences of not meeting the needs of tomorrow with properly training our workforce today, it is absolutely our responsibility. This will be my last newsletter as past president and so I implore all of you once again to reach out to a board member and direct any free time you may graciously be able to spare towards promoting great careers in engineering and the trades.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Binsfeld".

Mike Binsfeld
Northwest Branch Past President

mikebinsfeld@jfbrennan.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Check your emails from the Northwest Branch for all upcoming conferences, construction site visits, socials, outreach programs, and volunteer opportunities. The board is working diligently on lining up a great winter and spring of ASCE events!

PAST EVENTS

Northwest Branch Hosts the Wisconsin Section January meeting

On Thursday, January 19, your ASCE Northwest Branch hosted the ASCE Wisconsin Section bi-monthly meeting and branch social. We kicked off the night at the office of American Engineering Testing in Schofield with the Section meeting. The section meeting was followed by a Northwest Branch sponsored social at the Brews Brothers bar/restaurant in Schofield.

2017 ASCE Regions 3, 6 & 8 Workshop for Section & Branch Leaders

The ASCE Regions 3, 6 & 8 Workshop for Section & Branch Leaders took place February 3rd and 4th, 2017 in Minneapolis, MN at the Marriott Minneapolis City Center. The workshop, and workshops like it, are designed to strengthen and expand programs and activities of Sections and Branches by providing members an opportunity to network with peers, exchange ideas, and gather input. A workshop for Student Chapter Leaders and a Younger Member Council annual meeting both ran concurrently with this event, allowing section and branch leaders to interact with ASCE's younger members.

Corona Woychik, a Director-at-Large for the Northwest Branch, attended as the Branch representative. As an active student member in the past and new Branch board member, she found the Workshop to be especially beneficial. "The Workshop covered tools provided by ASCE National that can be used by section and branch leaders. Some tools are older, some are newer, but all are new to me. I walked away from the weekend inspired by the Dream Big film, the National ASCE leadership that spoke, and everyone who attended. The enthusiasm for the Civil Engineering profession was contagious." Any further questions regarding the Workshop can be directed to Corona.

STEM EDUCATION – Exploration for Girls at UW - Stevens Point



On Friday, February 17, 2017, the ASCE Northwest Branch took part in the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point STEM event for 7th and 8th grade. Dan Borchardt and Abby Bernhagen (MSA Professional Services) and Andrew Walters (American Engineering Testing) helped out at the event. The STEM Career Day for Girls drew 500 participants from schools throughout Central Wisconsin.

ASCE hosted an exhibit where the girls learned the ingredients that go into making asphalt pavement. They made asphalt cookies with ingredients including Oreo's, Graham Crackers, Reese's Pieces, oatmeal, and melted chocolate that represented raw materials used to make asphalt for road projects. Then they got to eat their creations.

After an opening session with keynote speakers, students participated in hands-on workshops and learned of the many career paths available with a STEM education. The ASCE team helped girls with a crash cushioning experiment. They worked in groups to design and make a crash barrier capable of catching an egg dropped from different heights — including from a balcony. Some of the eggs actually survived the drop.



The ASCE Northwest Branch also sponsored \$200 worth of scholarships that went towards paying admission for several attendees at the event. ASCE is looking forward to our next K-12 Outreach event, the Wisconsin DI (Destination Imagination) State Tournament on Saturday, April 8, hosted at UW-Stevens Point.

St Croix Bridge Tour

On October 28th, six eager civil engineers toured the St. Croix Crossing project in Houlton, Wisconsin and Stillwater, Minnesota. The tour started with an overview of the Wisconsin approach and future bicycle/pedestrian facilities by tour guides Kyle McLean and Teresa Davis. The crew then headed across the St. Croix River to the St. Croix Crossing bridge. Jon Sendor again delivered a phenomenal tour of the bridge and the tour participants walked all over, beneath and on top of the bridge. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience and we are grateful for Jon's information and enthusiasm.







The 2017 ASCE Report Card is Out!

Every four years ASCE evaluates America's infrastructure and assigns a grade based on the condition and performance. This year's grade is a D+ as it was back in 2013. More information including a breakdown of grade by state and category as well as information on what we can do as engineers to help improve the results of the next report card can be found at the link below.

<http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/>

UPDATE ASCE ONLINE PROFILE REGULARLY

Please update your ASCE online profile with current E-mail and mailing addresses to guarantee you receive ASCE newsletters and important information. As a reminder, those of you that have passed your PE exam, make sure to change your account with ASCE National. To update your ASCE profile, go to www.asce.org or call (800) 548-272.

2017 Calendar of Events

The calendar is simply a guide and may change throughout the year

June:

- Northwest Branch Board Meeting

July:

- Northwest Branch Board Meeting

August:

- Northwest Branch Board Meeting

September:

- Northwest Branch Hosts the Wisconsin Section Annual Meeting in La Crosse
 - See attached save-the-date.

CURRENT NORTHWEST BRANCH OFFICERS

President: Kris Roppe, ISG.: La Crosse; kris.roppe@is-grp.com

President-Elect: TBD

Secretary-Treasurer:

Andy Walters, American Engineering Testing, Inc., Wausau, WI; awalters@amengtest.com

Past President: Wisconsin Section Northwest Branch Representative:

Mike Binsfeld - J.F. Brennan Company: La Crosse, WI; mikebinsfeld@jfbrennan.com

Northwest Branch Directors-At-Large:

Teresa Davis – WisDOT Northwest Region; Eau Claire (715) 836-7277

Evan Berglund - Krech Ojard & Associates, Inc.; Eau Claire: (715) 553-7374

Dan Borchardt - MSA Professional Services – Wasau, WI – (715) 304-0448

Corona Woychik - ISG: La Crosse; corona.woychik@is-grp.com

Newsletter Editors:

Kris Roppe & Mike Binsfeld



SAVE THE DATE

WHEN

Thursday, September 28th, 2017

WHERE

La Crosse Center

300 Harborview Plaza, La Crosse, WI 54601

DETAILS TO FOLLOW

QUESTIONS? • Contact Mike Binsfeld • mikebinsfeld@jfbrennan.com

**2017 WI SECTION
ANNUAL MEETING**