

KEVIN ARTL
PRESIDENT & CEO

LEADERSHIP & POLICY BRIEFING

AUGUST 2025

ACEC IL Supported Measures to Improve Project Delivery Signed into Law



Gov. JB Pritzker has signed into law key legislation backed by **ACEC Illinois** to modernize project delivery across the state.

Why it matters: These measures give IDOT more tools to accelerate projects, reduce costs, and deliver infrastructure improvements more efficiently.

What's new:

- **HB 3177:** Removes the project cap on Construction Manager/General Contractor (CMGC) projects, allowing IDOT greater flexibility to speed up delivery. The legislation also provided IDOT greater capacity for innovative project delivery.

- **SB 2253:** Cuts red tape on land acquisition and fast-tracks coordination with the Illinois Commerce Commission.

How it happened: ACEC Illinois worked closely with **IDOT** and the bill sponsors including **Rep. Kevin Olickal, Rep. Jay Hoffman, and Sen. Ram Villivalam** to support passage of these new laws.

The bottom line:

“These initiatives will expedite project delivery and save taxpayer dollars,” said **Kevin Artl**, President & CEO of ACEC Illinois.

Senate backs FY 2026 infrastructure boost



The Senate Committee on Appropriations has approved the FY 2026 Transportation and Housing Appropriations Bill, with a 27-1 vote, underscoring strong bipartisan support.

Why it matters: This bill allocates significant resources to modernize transportation infrastructure, focusing on roads, bridges, and transit, which are crucial for economic development and public safety.

- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) receives \$63.3 billion, including \$350 million for a competitive Rural Bridge Repair and Rehabilitation program, \$25 million for high-priority Tribal transportation projects, and \$10 million for the National Scenic Byways Program.
- The Federal Transit Administration is allocated \$16.8 billion, supporting the Capital Investment Grants program, bus and bus facilities program, and ferry program, including rural ferries.

- The big picture: With \$26.5 billion in discretionary budget authority for the Department of Transportation, the bill aims to improve infrastructure and boost aviation safety.
- Initiatives like the BUILD grant program and Essential Air Service program are included to enhance connectivity.

What's next: As the bill progresses, its focus on infrastructure investment could lead to enhanced economic opportunities across the nation.

- The approval reflects a commitment to addressing America's infrastructure challenges with fiscal responsibility and community support.

More Details from the OBBB for Engineering Firms



The American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) scored significant wins in the budget reconciliation bill passed by Congress. The effort represents the culmination of over two-years of advocacy and lobbying for these significant tax policy victories for the industry.

Why it matters: This bill addresses key financial concerns, ensuring long-term sustainability and growth for engineering firms.

- **R&D Deductibility:** Permanently restored starting in 2025, this change allows engineering firms to invest more in innovation.
- Firms with less than \$31 million in gross receipts benefit from retroactive relief for 2022-2024, enhancing financial stability.

Business tax benefits:

- **Section 199A Passthrough Deduction:** Extended permanently at 20%, supporting small businesses in maintaining their tax advantages.
- **Corporate Tax Rate:** Retained at 21%, providing a stable tax environment conducive to planning and investment.
- **Increased SALT Cap:** Raised from \$10,000 to \$40,000 with annual adjustments through 2029, benefiting high-income earners in the industry.

Educational and Capital Investments:

- **Section 127 Provisions:** Employers can continue to assist employees with educational expenses and student loan repayments, fostering workforce development.

- Interest Deductibility and Full Expensing: Permanently restored for certain capital investments, encouraging infrastructure growth.

The bottom line: The ACEC Research Institute found that [82% of firms used their tax savings from the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act](#) to hire new employees.

Zoom Out: The additional industry activity fueled by tax cuts would generate \$1.4 trillion in revenue for the broader U.S. economy in 2026. According to the ACEC Research Institute, the additional industry activity would support nearly 7 million jobs.

[View the ACEC IL Webinar on the OBBS Here](#)

Rural transit solutions unveiled in new study



Eno Transportation released a [new study](#) on rural transit in the U.S. titled **"Connecting Communities: Options and Considerations for Enhancing Rural Transit."** Conducted with the German Embassy, it tackles the challenge of providing sustainable transit in low-density, high-distance areas.

Why it matters: Reliable transit can transform lives by providing access to jobs, healthcare, and education, especially for vulnerable populations in rural areas.

- Nearly 66 million Americans live in rural areas with limited transit options.
- Public transportation supports local economies and reduces emissions.

Case studies: The report highlights various strategies:

- Meridian, MS: Transitioned from fixed-route to on-demand service, addressing unique local needs.
- Bay Transit Express, VA: Combines on-demand and fixed routes, balancing cost and efficiency.
- Kyle, TX & Monrovia, CA: Rideshare partnerships enhance access but require careful cost management.

Funding and resources: Federal funding and partnerships can help overcome cost

barriers, enabling small cities to improve transit services.

- Training programs and technical assistance resources are also available.

Catch Up



ACEC Illinois members recently met with **Congresswoman Delia Ramirez** to discuss the latest legislative developments from the US Capitol and to understand the potential direction after the August recess. During the meeting, Congresswoman Ramirez provided insights into key infrastructure bills and the implications for engineering and development projects within Illinois. This dialogue underscores ACEC Illinois' commitment to staying informed and advocating for policies that support the engineering sector's growth and address pressing infrastructure needs.

Thomas Carney, a seasoned leader in public service with over two decades of experience, will assume the role of Assistant Secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation effective August 4, 2025. His tenure as Commissioner for the Chicago Department of Transportation was marked by significant achievements like securing the \$830 million Build Better Together Capital Bond and overseeing the successful hosting of the 2024 Democratic National Convention. ACEC Illinois is excited to collaborate with Carney in his new role, anticipating enhanced synergy in advancing transportation initiatives across the state.

The Illinois Department of Transportation has appointed **Teresa Price as Region 4 Engineer**, effective August 1, 2025. She brings over 35 years of engineering and management experience, beginning her career in IDOT's District 8 office and leading major projects across the Midwest. Most recently, she served as Construction Compliance Engineer in the Bureau of Investigations and Compliance.

The **FHWA** plans to issue a **truck parking survey** by year's end, an agency spokesperson said. The exact date isn't entirely clear, but the document will provide a comprehensive picture of the [ongoing shortage of public spots](#) for semi-trucks along the nation's highways.



This week on Engineering Works, host Hayley Burns sits down with Tice Cole and Joey Heger, project managers at Crawford, Murphy & Tilly. They share a behind-the-scenes look at one of the largest infrastructure efforts in Kane County's history—the Longmeadow Parkway Improvements project, led by the Kane County Division of Transportation.



[Listen Here](#)



TICE COLE
SENIOR HIGHWAYS & BRIDGES
ENGINEER, CMT



JOEY HEGER PE, SE
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER, CMT



COMMITTEE CHAIR

Spotlight

JAKE WINKLER



How long have you been a part of ACEC IL?

4 years

Tell us a little bit about the committee you chair.

The Risk Management Committee is focused on identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks that impact ACEC firms. Comprised of ACEC members, insurance company representatives and brokers, the committee provides valuable insights and guidance on best practices for risk management, including liability, insurance, and regulatory compliance.

By fostering a culture of proactive risk management, the committee aims to safeguard the interests of engineering professionals and enhance the resilience and sustainability of their firms.

Join the ACEC Risk Management Committee to stay informed about emerging risks and to contribute to the development of effective strategies that protect and advance our profession.

What's the number one reason people should join your committee?

The number one reason to join the ACEC Risk Management Committee is to gain access to invaluable expertise and resources that can help you effectively navigate and mitigate risks within your engineering firm. By participating in the committee, you'll stay ahead of emerging threats, enhance your firm's resilience, and ensure compliance with industry standards, ultimately safeguarding your business and professional reputation.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

In my spare time, I love creating memorable moments with my children—Elle (5), Caroline (2), and Levi (9 months). Whether it's fishing at our cabin, going to local carnivals, or cooking delicious meals, I cherish every opportunity to watch them grow and learn.

Tell us one fun fact about yourself.

My great-grandfather, Walter Winkler, founded Peoria Charter Coach, one of the largest bus companies in Illinois, in 1941. He sold his family car and took a loan from his sister's chicken egg business to buy his first bus. The company was established to transport employees to Caterpillar during the gas rationing of World War II.



AFFILIATE MEMBER

Spotlight



What does your business do?

Specialize in corporate group medical insurance programs insurance.

What is a benefit of doing business with you?

With over 5000 employees across the United States Trucordia has the ability to offer our services to clients in every state.

With a comprehensive, analytical and collaborative approach, we offer plans unmatched plan designs.

Our offerings include:

Claims and financial analysis

Small and mid market plans

Employee claim assistance

Tele-medicine

TPA Services

COBRA, ASO, FSA, HRA, HSA and Transit plans

Worksite and voluntary programs

Executive life and disability insurance programs

Why are you a member of ACEC Illinois?

I joined the ACEC with the hope to consult with its members.

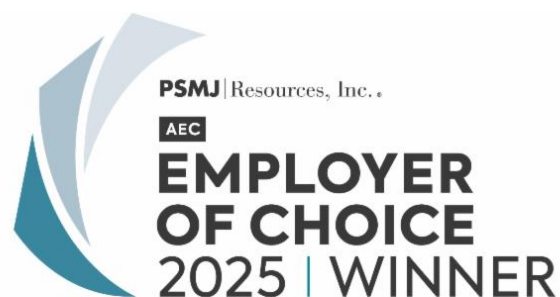
Contact information:

Total Insurance Services, a Trucordia Company

Michael Levin

Mikel@Totins.com

Member Updates:



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**EEI RECEIVES TWO PSMJ | RESOURCES, INC. AWARDS:
AEC EMPLOYER OF CHOICE AND CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE**

Engineering Enterprises, Inc. (EEI) has proven its commitment by creating a winning culture in a well-managed organization that delivers lasting results and has been ranked #3 among the top 10 companies on the 2025 AEC Employer of Choice Award. EEI has also received the PSMJ Circle of Excellence Award.

PSMJ | Resources, Inc., the global leader in business management data and guidance for architects and engineers, recently announced the winners of the 2025 AEC Employer of Choice and Circle of Excellence Awards, the industry's premier recognition of firms that have mastered workforce retention and productivity by achieving the highest level of employee engagement.

The AEC Employer of Choice Award is based on the results of PSMJ's 45-factor survey of nominated firms' employees, which delves into what they do to inspire, encourage, and engage their engineers, non-technical staff, and managers. "This award recognizes those that have proven their commitment to creating a winning culture that delivers lasting results for employees, owners, and clients by creating a place where talented professionals can really thrive," says PSMJ President Gregory Hart.

The Circle of Excellence Award recognizes firms that are successfully managed, based on 9 key performance metrics that demonstrate outstanding achievements in financial management, business development, growth, and turnover. This award represents the top 20% of participants in PSMJ's annual A/E Financial Performance Benchmark Survey. It is evidence that a firm is a well-managed organization.

The winning firms will be recognized at the PSMJ AEC THRIVE conference on October 3rd, in Chicago. The full list of winning firms can be found here: [PSMJ Announces 2025 AEC Employer of Choice Award Winners](#) and [PSMJ Announces 2025 Circle of Excellence Award Winners](#).

"We are extremely honored to receive these awards, which highlight our exceptional staff and our positive workplace culture," says Brad Sanderson, PE, Chief Operating Officer / President at EEI. "Creating a supportive and collaborative environment is essential to our success. Both awards are a testament to the dedication and hard work of every team member. We will continue to strive for excellence, fostering a workplace that values innovation, inclusivity, teamwork, and financial stability."

"These awards are a reflection of the exceptional people at EEI," says Jeff Freeman, PE, CFM, LEED AP, Chief Executive Officer. "We are immensely proud of our staff, who employ strong project management techniques to deliver successful projects for our clients. The success of our projects and clients fuels our team to continually seek new and better ways to address our clients' infrastructure challenges. With this culture of excellence, we attract and retain a top-notch team that continues to innovate and drive us forward."

For more information about EEI and our services, please visit www.eeiweb.com.

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About Engineering Enterprises, Inc. (EEI)

Engineering Enterprises, Inc. (EEI), founded in 1974, is an award-winning consulting engineering firm providing services to public agencies and private entities throughout northern Illinois. Over 80 experienced firm members including licensed professional civil engineers, land surveyors, and support team members provide a full range of services for planning, design, and construction of infrastructure projects, funding assistance, and municipal consulting. Our core values guide our staff on every project from initiation through completion keeping us committed to quality, service, and value for our clients. By offering outstanding service to every client, every day, we are able to assist with bettering the communities in which we serve.



**CBBEL Leads the Pack in Active Transportation
Alliance Bike Commuter Challenge**
More than 20 team members biked nearly 1,800 miles



Rosemont, Ill. – Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd. (CBBEL) is proud to have led the for-profit employer (100-499 employees) category of the Active Transportation Alliance’s 2025 Bike Commuter Challenge. Twenty-one CBBEL employees biked a total of 1,752 miles, with three employees each biking more than 200 miles.

According to the [Active Transportation Alliance](#), the annual Bike Commuter Challenge, “is a month-long biking competition where Chicagoland organizations compete to see who can earn the most points by riding their bike for work-related trips.”

“After two decades of our Bike to Work Program, it’s great to see our new team members carrying the torch and keeping the program going strong,” said CBBEL President Mike Kerr, PE, who founded the program in 2006. “We want to create an environment where our team members find it easy and convenient to commute by bike, and I think these numbers show that we have.”

Founded to promote bicycling for the environment, fun, fitness, and transportation, CBBEL’s multi-award-winning Bike to Work Program works to make it as easy as possible for every employee to commute by bike, including paying **employees \$1 for every mile commuted by bike**. Since the creation of the year-round Program, employees have ridden over 450,000 miles.

CBBEL is recognized by the League of American Bicyclists as a Platinum level Bicycle Friendly Business, which denotes an employer’s efforts to encourage a more bicycle-friendly atmosphere for employees and clients, and honors innovative bike friendly efforts. CBBEL has been named one of the Best Workplaces for Commuters, which recognizes leaders offering outstanding commuter benefits to their employees.

Learn more about CBBEL’s Bike to Work Program at cbbel.com/bike-to-work.

About Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd. (CBBEL)

Founded in 1986, CBBEL is a full-service consulting engineering and surveying firm committed to delivering accurate, timely and cost-effective solutions to a wide range of engineering and environmental challenges. Our Illinois-based staff is comprised of more than 250 experienced and innovative professionals who provide engineering, surveying and environmental services. Learn more at CBBEL.com.



Oates Associates Reflects on ADA Anniversary with Continued Commitment to Accessible Infrastructure

Collinsville, IL - This weekend marks the 35th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a landmark civil rights law that continues to shape our built environment and guides us in creating inclusive public spaces. For Oates Associates, Inc. - a 100% employee-owned civil and structural engineering and surveying firm specializing in ADA transition planning - the anniversary serves as an opportunity to reflect on the impact of the ADA and the ongoing work still needed for accessibility for all.

“As engineers, accessibility has reshaped how we approach mobility,” said Jeffrey Rensing, PE, SE, chief executive officer of Oates Associates. “Whether it’s identifying physical barriers, developing realistic transition plans, or designing ADA-compliant sidewalks and spaces - our goal is to help communities create facilities that everyone can navigate safely.”

Oates Associates has worked with communities and institutions to assess accessibility conditions, prioritize improvements, and create actionable transition plans that align with ADA requirements. The firm's approach goes beyond compliance. "ADA planning isn't just about meeting standards," said Travis Helmkamp, PE, ADAC, project manager and lead engineer for the firm's ADA transition planning work. "It's about understanding how people interact with the environment, especially those for whom a small design change can have a big impact."

The 35th anniversary of the ADA is a reminder of how far we have come - and how much further we can go. Oates Associates remains committed to advancing accessibility through thoughtful planning and inclusive design - and supporting clients as they plan and build infrastructure that supports all users.

Now in its 45th year, Oates Associates is a 100% employee-owned multi-disciplined design firm with offices in Collinsville and Belleville, Illinois and St. Louis and St. Charles, Missouri. Oates provides engineering and surveying services for transportation and building projects. Specifically, this includes transportation and traffic engineering, ADA transition planning, stormwater management, site design, building and bridge structural design and inspections, surveying, and drone operations. For more information, visit www.oatesassociates.com or call 618.345.2200.

ENGINEERING ENTERPRISES, INC. WELCOMES BACK FIVE SUMMER INTERNS AS FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES



Engineering Enterprises, Inc. (EEI), an award-winning civil engineering and land surveying firm, is pleased to announce the full-time employment of five previous summer interns – **Daniel Harker, EI, Kyle Theurer, EI, Jenna Dinges, Noah Kuchler, EI, and Carlie Olsen, EI.** Last summer, they interned with the firm and showed us their outstanding abilities and commitment to the profession.

The hiring of these previous summer interns is a true testament to EEI's internship program which provides students with the opportunity to apply their coursework to challenging and meaningful projects. During their internships, they are provided with a mentor who partners with them to establish realistic yet challenging goals, engage in daily work activities, and collaborate on training and hands-on learning.

"We are thrilled to welcome back all of them as full-time employees," said Brad Sanderson, Chief Operating Officer / President. "Their hard work and dedication during their internships certainly impressed us, and we are confident that they will continue to grow in their careers."

For more information about EEI and our services, please visit: www.eeiweb.com.

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services for planning, design, and construction of infrastructure projects, funding assistance, and municipal consulting. Our core values guide our staff on every project from initiation through completion keeping us committed to quality, service, and value for our clients. By offering outstanding service to every client, every day, we are able to assist with bettering the communities in which we serve.



ENGINEERING ENTERPRISES, INC. WELCOMES TWO NEW STAFF MEMBERS



Engineering Enterprises, Inc. (EEI), an award-winning civil engineering and land surveying firm, is pleased to announce the hiring of **Zach Splayt, EI**, as a Project Engineer and **Ericka Corral** as an Accounting Assistant.

Zach graduated from Florida Gulf Coast University with a bachelor's degree in environmental engineering. He joins our Environmental Group, bringing valuable experience from his prior three years of work.

Ericka brings over fifteen years of experience in banking, municipal accounting, and office management to her role. She will be responsible for supporting the firm's Accounting functions, ensuring that our company continues to run smoothly and efficiently.

"We are excited to have Zach and Ericka join our team," said Brad Sanderson, PE, Chief Operating Officer / President. "Their education and experience will be invaluable to our firm as we continue to grow. We are confident that they will make significant contributions to our team and help us achieve our goals."

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Build
momentum.



CONSTRUCTION
BUILD MOMENTUM

Healthy Politics Episode 13: The Real Cost of Care

LISTEN
HERE

Healthy Politics is a series hosted by Holmes Murphy Compliance Director Nick Karls and Senior Advisor Den Bishop, focusing on healthcare-related topics in politics.

In this episode, we break down the newly passed “Big Beautiful Bill”, discussing how its provisions are set to shape the future of employer-sponsored healthcare, impose Medicaid work requirements, and reduce federal spending.

We also explore how these changes may pressure hospitals, increase employer healthcare costs, and expand the uninsured population - creating ripple effects throughout the healthcare system.

If we look ahead to the next presidential election, what role could rising uninsured rates shape healthcare policy conversation, and will the market be ready to respond? Don't miss this conversation!



8.26.2025 - 8.28.2025 - Virtual Training - *2DHM-B: SRH-2D Model Terrain Development with Various Data Sources* - [Register here](#)

9.10.2025 - Virtual Training - *IDOT Earthwork Webinar* - [Register here](#)

9.11.2025 - 9.12.2025 - *A/E/C Project Management Bootcamp* - [Register here](#)

9.17.2025 - Webinar - *Fall 2025 NEPA Updates* - [Register here](#)

9.18.2025 - *IDOT Regional Luncheon* - [Save the Date](#)

9.24.2025 - Webinar - *Risk Drivers: 2025 New Release!* - [Register here](#)

9.30.2025 - 10.3.2025 - Virtual Training - *2DHM: Two-Dimensional Hydraulic Modeling of Rivers at Highway Encroachments* - [Register here](#)

10.7.2025 - 10.9.2025 - *Intro to NEPA Essentials* - [Save the Date](#)

10.16.2025 - Emerging Professionals Webinar Series Kicks Off! RTK Drones in Transportation - [Register here](#)

10.21.2025 - 10.23.2025 - OpenRoads Designer Fundamentals Training - [Save the Date](#)

10.28.2025 - 10.30.2025 - 2DHM-A: SRH-2D Model Data Files, Diagnostics and Verifying 2D Model Results - [Save the Date](#)

11.12.2025 - 11.13.2025 - OpenRoads Designer StormCAD - [Save the Date](#)

11.18.2025 - 11.19.2025 - ACEC IL Fall Conference - [Save the Date](#)

12.9.2025 - IDOT Phase 1 Seminar - [Save the Date](#)

2.18.2026 - ACEC IL 2026 EEA Gala - [Save the Date](#)

6.16.2026 - ACEC IL Spring Board Meeting & Luncheon - [Save the Date](#)

2025 Salary, Benefits & Business Practices Survey Results - [Register here](#) (PDF of results will be emailed to those who complete the registration)

On Demand Education:

- **AI Ethics in Engineering Design Practices: Safeguarding Standards in a Digital Era & State Statutes - [Register here](#)**

SUBMIT UPDATES & ARTICLES:

Please submit firm update & news articles by the 15th of each month to: bethany@acecil.org Articles and updates will be included in the membership newsletter, posted on our website, and shared through our social media feeds.



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