



ACEC ILLINOIS THE CONNECTOR

LEADERSHIP & POLICY BRIEFING



KEVIN ARTL
PRESIDENT & CEO

July 2026

👋 Welcome to this month's *ACEC Illinois Connector*

👋 **Situational awareness:** The Illinois Tollway's "Driving Connections" capital program, with a \$26.5 billion investment over 15 years, aims to enhance infrastructure and innovation across the region.

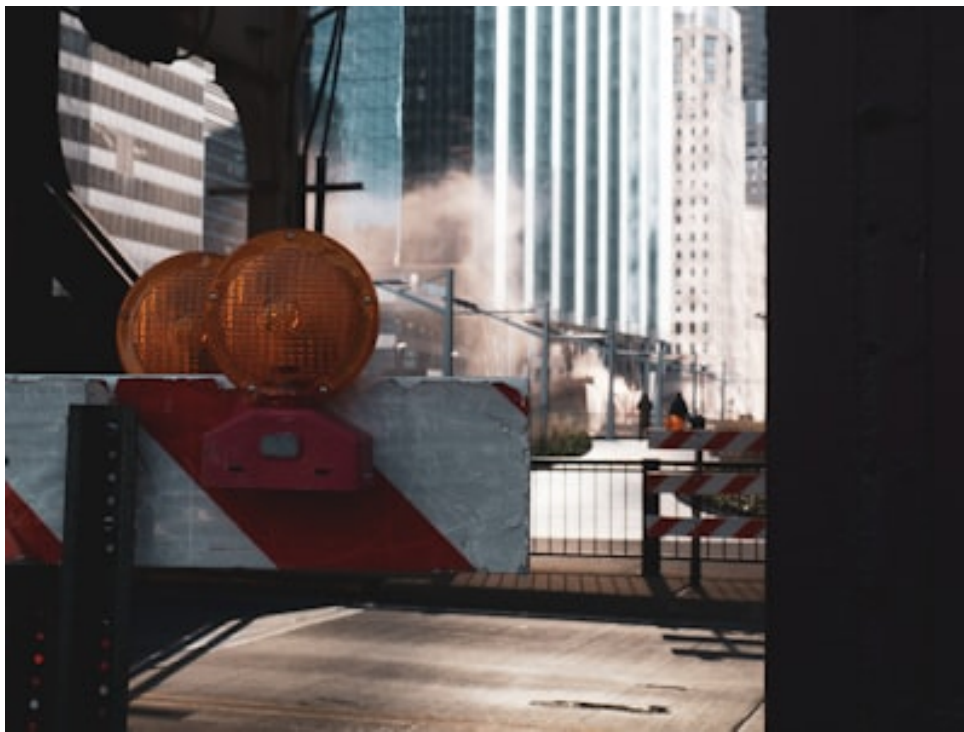
📅 **Save the date:** Public hearings for the Tollway's funding plan are open through August 3.

🎉 **Big Wins:** ACEC Research Institute's study shows a rise in successful Progressive Design-Build projects, with a significant increase in project value and satisfaction.

Let's dive in!



Highway costs stabilize



The Federal Highway Administration's [latest update](#) shows a 2.2% decrease in highway construction costs for Q4 2025, though seasonally adjusted figures reflect a 1.2% increase.

Why it matters: This stabilization ends a period of rapid cost escalation from 2021 to 2024, impacting the buying power of infrastructure funding.

- The National Highway Construction Cost Index (NHCCI) doubled from 2003 to 2021, then tripled from 2021 to 2025, peaking at 3.3079.
- The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding has lost 32% of its value due to these cost increases.

The big picture: The NHCCI is expected to rise further, influenced by higher crude oil prices due to geopolitical tensions.

- Future updates may reflect significant increases in diesel and asphalt components, potentially impacting project budgets further.

By the numbers: Since the IIJA's signing, \$270 billion in obligations have been made, but adjusted for NHCCI increases, the effective spending is around \$183 billion.

- This represents a \$87.6 billion reduction in funding value.

Tollway capital program



[The Illinois Tollway's "Driving Connections" capital program](#) outlines a \$26.5 billion investment over 15 years, enhancing infrastructure and innovation.

Why it matters: This program targets corridor modernization, congestion reduction, and smart infrastructure across the 12-county region.

O'Hare Access:

- \$830 million for Route 390 and I-490 Tollways, including a \$534 million interchange project.
- Completion expected by 2027, with ongoing work on six interchange ramps.

Veterans Memorial Tollway (I-355):

- Largest proposed investment at \$6.63 billion.
- Focus on reconstruction of I-88/I-355 interchange, new travel lanes, and technology upgrades.

Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88):

- \$3.53 billion for new western access, corridor expansions, and rehabilitation.
- Includes new access point near Dixon and widening closer to Chicago.

North Tri-State Tollway:

- \$3.07 billion for roadway rehabilitation and bridge reconstruction.

Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90):

- \$2.60 billion for SmartRoads, expanded interchanges, and reconstruction.

South and Central Tri-State Tollways:

- Collectively over \$4 billion for repairs, reconstructions, and new infrastructure.

Program-wide Investments:

- \$5.57 billion for future needs, partnerships, and sustainability projects.

What's next: The Tollway's public engagement process will run through August, with hearings and comments guiding the program's finalization.

- ACEC Illinois members are encouraged to use the links below to submit a supportive statement to the Tollway or attend a public hearing.

[Submit a comment on the Tollway's "Driving Connections" capital program](#)

[Join ACEC Members at a Tollway Public Hearing](#)





According to the latest [ACEC Market Intelligence Brief](#), the education market continues to thrive despite demographic shifts, driven by facility needs and workforce trends.

Why it matters: Educational design and construction spending reached \$140 billion in April 2026, marking a 2.1% increase from the previous year.

- This sector accounts for 11.2% of all nonresidential spending, only trailing markets like manufacturing and power.
- Public investment dominates with \$114 billion, while private spending grows faster at 6.1% annually.

The big picture: With a projected decline in the college-age population, institutions will pivot from expansion to strategic investments in space planning and facility assessments.

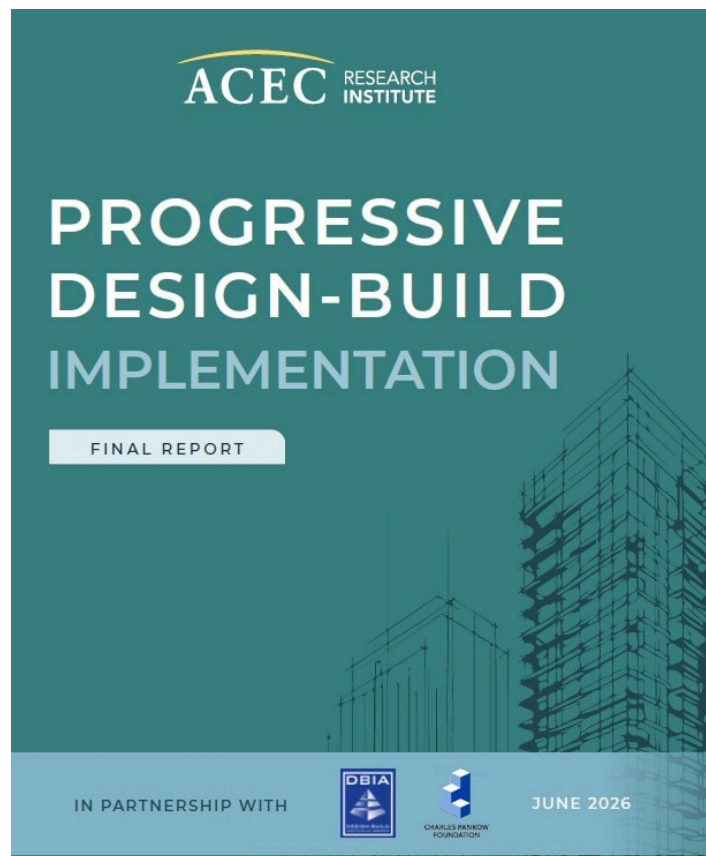
- Capital outlays for public education hit \$113 billion in FY2024, a 16% rise, signaling ongoing opportunities for engineering firms.
- Energy efficiency improvements and workforce-aligned education are reshaping infrastructure needs.

By the numbers: The K-12 sector faces \$40 billion in potential investment needs for air conditioning as temperatures rise.

- Libraries and museums, with deferred maintenance backlogs, present further opportunities for modernization.



Progressive Design Build study insights



The ACEC Research Institute's [new study](#) highlights key factors driving successful Progressive Design-Build (PDB) projects.

Why it matters: With 239 projects analyzed, the study provides practical guidance for engineering, construction, and owner teams.

- Median cost variance was just 0.6%, with schedule variance at 0.0%.
- 49% of projects finished at or below initial cost; 66.7% were on or ahead of schedule.

Phase 1 focus: Successful projects treat Phase 1 as a disciplined decision-making process.

- This phase involves working through scope, cost, schedule, risk allocation, and approvals before construction.
- Clear governance and continuity of key personnel are crucial for success.

Expanding use: 88% of firms noted an increase in PDB projects, with 81% reporting higher project value.

- Satisfaction with PDB is strong, with 79% of respondents satisfied with the delivery method.

For ACEC Illinois members: The findings are particularly relevant as agencies like the Illinois Tollway and IDOT evaluate alternative delivery tools.

- The [report is available through the ACEC Research Institute](#), offering valuable insights for future projects.

The Market Edge: Navigating Policy & The Economy

Policy is moving fast — and markets are moving with it. In this episode of The Market Edge, Morgan Stanley's Monica Guerra breaks down the biggest forces set to shape



the U.S. economy in 2026. We cover midterms, industrial policy, labor supply, inflation, energy markets, construction financing, housing demand, and the rise of data-center-driven digital infrastructure. A must-listen for leaders navigating the future of the built environment.

[Listen Here!](#)

BOARD MEMBER

Spotlight

DIVYA SINGH
WSP



1. How long have you been a part of ACEC IL?

21 years

2. What positions have you held within the ACEC-IL organization?

I was a graduate of the 2021 ACEC IL Leadership Institute and a graduation of the 2025 Executive Leadership Institute. Also a member of the City of Chicago Agencies Committee and the CDB Committee.

3. What is the number one reason firms should become an ACEC-IL Member?

ACEC-IL connects firms to advocacy, leadership, and opportunities that directly impact business growth and industry advancement.

4. Why should individuals become involved in ACEC Illinois?

ACEC Illinois gives individuals a platform to grow as leaders, influence the industry, and build meaningful professional relationships.

5. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Outside of work, I enjoy time with my family, walking my dogs, Chicago's skyline and lakefront, traveling, and supporting women and diverse workforce in transportation industry.

6. Tell us one fun fact about yourself.

I speak 4 languages.

ACEC II Member Updates...



ENGINEERING ENTERPRISES, INC. WELCOMES BACK A SUMMER INTERN AS A FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE

Engineering Enterprises, Inc. (EEI), an award-winning civil engineering and land surveying firm, is pleased to announce that former summer intern **Jack Rimington, EI**, has joined the firm as a full-time employee. He recently earned a Bachelor of Science in Engineering with a Civil Concentration from Olivet Nazarene University. During his internship last summer, Jack demonstrated strong technical ability, professionalism, and a clear commitment to the engineering profession.

EEI's internship program provides students with meaningful, hands-on experience that allows them to apply their coursework to real-world projects. Interns work alongside experienced professionals, receive guidance from dedicated mentors, and gain exposure to daily project activities, training, and collaborative learning opportunities.

"We are pleased to welcome Jack back to EEI in a full-time role," said Brad Sanderson, Chief Operating Officer / President. "His performance during his internship reflected both his potential and his dedication, and we look forward to supporting his continued growth and success at EEI."

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

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.

SINGH + Associates Expands Structural Engineering Capabilities with New Leadership

SINGH + Associates, Inc. welcomes **Daniel S. Filice, PE, SE, PMP** as Vice President and Director of Engineering. With more than 27 years of experience in transportation infrastructure, Filice will lead the firm's structural engineering practice while providing technical leadership, quality oversight, and strategic direction for SINGH's multidisciplinary engineering teams.

His appointment marks the launch of the firm's structural engineering practice, expanding SINGH's services to include planning, design, and preparation of plans and special provisions for bridges, retaining walls, and other transportation structures. He will also oversee the growth of the practice, mentor engineering staff, and help strengthen project delivery across the firm's transportation portfolio.



Along with this expansion, SINGH is now IDOT prequalified in **Structures: Simple** and **Structures: Typical**, positioning the firm to deliver a broader range of structural engineering services to transportation agencies throughout Illinois.

The new practice builds SINGH's established transportation expertise, extending the firm's multidisciplinary approach across roadway, traffic, ITS, lighting, electrical, and now structural engineering.



Klingner Engineer Licensed in Arizona

Sean Henry, Carbondale Regional Office Manager and a Senior Engineer for Klingner & Associates, P.C. (Klingner), has become a registered Professional Engineer (PE) in the State of Arizona. His experience encompasses all aspects of site design and municipal infrastructure, including water treatment, storage, and distribution; sewer treatment collection, pumping, and sludge disposal; and street, sidewalk, traffic signal, parking lot, storm sewer, and general infrastructure maintenance and repair. His broad technical experience enables him to deliver practical, cost-effective solutions that support the long-term needs of communities and public agencies.

Henry is also licensed in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee. He serves as Chairman of Illinois Public Service Institute and is a past-president of the Illinois Chapter President of American Public Works Association. He is also a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Institute of Traffic Engineers, the International Municipal Signal Association, the American Concrete Institute, the National Society of Professional Engineers, and the Illinois Society of Professional Engineers. He holds a bachelor of science in civil engineering from Missouri University of Science and Technology, where he is a member of the Academy of Civil Engineers.

ABOUT KLINGNER & ASSOCIATES, P.C.

Klingner & Associates, P.C. (Klingner) is a family and employee-owned engineering, surveying, and architecture firm focused on enhancing communities across the Midwest. Founded in 1905, Klingner features a staff of 170+ licensed engineers, architects, surveyors, and support personnel. This multidisciplinary team manages projects of all sizes and complexities from offices in Quincy, Ill.; Galesburg, Ill.; Carbondale, Ill.; Columbia, Mo.; Hannibal, Mo.; Cape Girardeau, Mo.; Burlington, Iowa; Davenport, Iowa; and Pella, Iowa. www.klingner.com.



Klingner Engineer Licensed in Missouri

Ryan Kelley, a water resources engineer for Klingner & Associates, P.C. (Klingner), has become a registered Professional Engineer (PE) in the State of Missouri. His experience includes bridge, stream and river-hydraulic modeling, watershed studies, permitting, and drainage way designs utilizing advanced modeling software.



Kelley joined the Klingner team in 2022 and is based in the firm's Quincy Regional Office. He holds a bachelor of science in civil engineering from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and a master of engineering in civil engineering from Colorado State University. Kelley is also licensed in Illinois.

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**Oates Associates Welcomes Former Interns
to Full-Time Positions**



Collinsville, IL (June 16, 2026) - Oates Associates, Inc. – a 100% employee-owned civil and structural engineering and surveying firm – welcomes five former interns into full-time Associate Project Designer roles. Andrew Holba, Cameron Ramirez, Hayden Ott, Jon Daugherty, and Owen Verning bring fresh perspectives and enthusiasm to the firm's growing team of employee-owners.

Holba, Ramirez, and Daugherty support transportation projects in the firm's Belleville and Collinsville offices, while Ott contributes to civil/site projects in Collinsville. Verning joins the building structural team in the St. Louis office. All five employees began their careers at Oates Associates as interns and, after earning their Bachelor of Science degrees in civil engineering, have continued their professional development with the firm. Holba, Ramirez, Ott, and Daugherty graduated from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, while Verning earned his degree from Missouri University of Science and Technology.

Oates Associates looks forward to supporting their continued growth and the contributions they will make to projects and clients across the region.

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



Welcome Robert "Bob" Dienhart Director of Geomatics



InNova Consulting Inc. is pleased to welcome Bob as Director of Geomatics.

In this role, Bob will lead InNova's Geomatic Survey, Reality Capture, and Data Collection services, supporting engineering, planning, design, construction, and asset management projects across the firm. His team combines licensed surveying expertise with advanced geospatial technologies, including Trimble survey and scanning systems, to deliver survey-grade accuracy from boundary and topographic surveys to high-definition 3D laser scanning and digital reality capture.

We're excited for Bob to bring his expertise to InNova and to help our clients reduce project risk through precise, reliable field data.

InNova Consulting, Inc. is proud to be a woman and minority-owned engineering and consulting firm specializing in civil engineering, traffic engineering, transportation planning, infrastructure solutions, and IT solutions for public and private sector clients across the Midwest. Known for our client-focused approach, InNova delivers innovative, data-driven solutions that enhance mobility, safety, and community connectivity.



For more information, visit www.innovaconsultinc.com





Pictured are the Leadership Institute graduates who attended the Awards Luncheon this past June, where they received their Certificates of Completion at the Annual ACEC Illinois Spring Awards Luncheon.

Congratulations to the ACEC Illinois Leadership Institute Class of 2026!

Since February, these professionals have invested in their growth through the ACEC Illinois Leadership Institute, participating in sessions led by industry experts on leadership, communication, business development, finance, recruiting, and more.

Throughout the program, this year's class had the opportunity to learn from outstanding instructors, build valuable leadership skills, engage in meaningful conversations, and strengthen connections with peers across the industry.

Several participants also represented ACEC Illinois in Washington, D.C., during the ACEC National Convention & Legislative Summit, where they participated in Capitol Hill visits and advocated for issues important to the engineering industry.

We're proud to recognize these graduates and all they have accomplished through their commitment to professional growth and leadership development!

 Mohamad O. Alsharbini Hanson Professional Services Inc. Assoc. Roadway Discipline Manager	 Daniel Holland Civil Design, Inc. Sr. Land Surveyor Lead - Survey
 Sarah Archer Metro Strategies Group Senior Director	 Byron A. Jara Prairie Engineers Hydrographic Surveyor
 Scott Billings SCI Engineering, Inc. Natural & Cultural Resources Manager	 Elizabeth Jensen Christopher B. Burke Engineering Department Head, Traffic Ops
 Tiffany Bauer Brase Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc. Project Manager	 Kate Kasch Schulstad Hampton, Lenzini & Renwick, Inc. Project Manager
 Edmund Burke Christopher B. Burke Engineering Assistant Department Head	 Michael Martin Gasperec Elberts Consulting, LLC Civil Engineering Design Lead
 Damiel Cox Infrastructure Engineering, Inc Team Leader	 Raciel Ocampo Homer & Shifrin, Inc. Regional Manager
 Lien Dastgir KAD Engineering President	 Marina Osier Prairie Engineers Natural Resources Discipline Lead
 Chirag Dave Infrastructure Engineering, Inc Construction Mgr./Resident Engineer	 Kyle Vander Zee Thomas Engineering Group, LLC Project Manager
 Jose Garcia Ciorba Group, Inc. Water Resources Project Engineer II	 Matt Villanueva Primera Engineers, Ltd Sr. Roadway Group Manager
 Mark Gockowski Baxter & Woodman, Inc. Asst. Dept. Manager	 Brian Wesolowski Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Inc. Director of Civil Design
 James Hamelka Collins Engineers, Inc. Senior Vice President	 Matthew Westerkamp
 Jason Heinekamp TERRA Engineering, Ltd Transportation Practice Lead	 Luke Wojcicki Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc. Project Manager
 Todd Hoffman Baxter & Woodman, Inc. Associate Vice President	 Tyler Ziegler Civil Design, Inc. Sr. Civil Engineer Lead - Structures



MEMBERSHIP DUES HAVE BEEN SENT OUT!

ACEC Illinois dues invoices have been sent out. If you need a new copy or have questions, please contact:
Emily Martinez - emily@acecil.org



ANNUAL LUNCHEON SPONSORSHIP

Cost:

- \$7,500/ Annually

What Sponsors Get:

- Recognition at all Regional Luncheons:
 - 8-12 luncheons yearly
- Listed as Platinum Sponsor for every regional luncheon:
 - Company logo on social posts
 - Company logo on promotional signs
 - Company verbally recognized at event
- Complimentary Registrations:
 - 2 complimentary registrations to every regional luncheon
 - These complimentary seats are also at a reserved front row table

ANNUAL MARKETING SPONSORSHIP

Cost:

- \$2,000/ Annually

What Sponsors Get:

- Monthly Social Media Post
 - Advertisement, Article, Announcement, etc.
 - Shared on Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn pages.
- Monthly Newsletter
 - Advertisement, Article, Announcement, etc. included in the monthly newsletter: *The Connector*
 - *The Connector* is emailed to all ACEC IL Members and is shared on our website.
- Registration for ACEC Illinois Events
 - Two attendees for the Annual ACEC Illinois Fall Conference
 - Exhibit booth at the Annual ACEC IL Fall Conference

Sponsorship Renewal!

Reach out to Bethany!

ACEC Career Center

Find Your Next Hiring Match

The American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) Career Center helps you connect with qualified candidates who align with your firm's needs and long-term goals. Showcase your job openings and simplify the hiring process of growing your firm! As an added benefit, you can post internship opportunities at no cost—helping you reach emerging talent early.

Get started [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS...

ACEC ILLINOIS



CHECK OUT THE CALENDAR HERE!

SUBMIT UPDATES & ARTICLES:

Please submit firm update & news articles by the 20th 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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