



ACEC ILLINOIS THE CONNECTOR

LEADERSHIP & POLICY BRIEFING



KEVIN ARTL
PRESIDENT & CEO

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Happy Thursday

There's a lot moving in infrastructure this week — from **federal permitting reform** and the launch of NITA to a new **\$6.4 billion IDOT highway program** and the first six-month look ahead at upcoming engineering opportunities.

And a quick reminder: [ACEC Illinois' Fall Conference is next week](#). We'll have leadership from **IDOT, the Illinois Tollway and CDB**, along with **former Cubs manager Joe Maddon and Christian Mitchell**, Gov. JB Pritzker's lieutenant governor running mate, for conversations on leadership, infrastructure and what could be ahead for Illinois.

[If you haven't registered yet, there's still time](#) — we hope to see you in Naperville.



IDOT Releases \$6.4B FY27 Highway Program — and Gives Firms a New Look Ahead



IDOT has released its [FY 2027 Annual Highway Improvement Program](#), outlining **\$6.4 billion** in planned state and local highway investment for the coming year. Unlike in prior years, IDOT is not releasing a new Multi-Year Program this fall; we expect a more comprehensive Multi-Year Program to be released next spring.

The FY27 program includes improvements to **1,303 miles of highways and 187 bridges**, along with safety and traffic improvements at 318 locations. Of the total, **\$4.58 billion** is programmed for the state highway system and \$1.82 billion for the local system.

Why it matters: IDOT's official program includes **\$659.2 million** in engineering activity on the state system across 289 programmed items.

 **By district:** ACEC Illinois' review of the published project tables indicates the largest engineering programs are approximately **\$337 million in District 1**, **\$98 million in District 2**, **\$56 million in District 3** and **\$51 million in District 8**. These are estimates, not official IDOT district totals.

Statewide engineering work is significant as well, including **\$30 million for centralized NBIS inspections**, **\$25 million for IPD advisory services**, **\$12.5 million for the Complex Projects Office** and **\$7.75 million for statewide bridge Phase II work**.

New PTB Look-Ahead Gives Firms an Earlier View

Along with the annual program, IDOT has released a new [six-month Professional Transportation Bulletin look-ahead](#), identifying engineering assignments anticipated for advertisement over the next six months.

The current look-ahead includes approximately \$163 million in estimated engineering fees. IDOT notes that the list is subject to change and is being provided for informational purposes, but it gives firms something they have not previously had: a forward view of the professional-services pipeline.

 **What ACEC is saying:** The quarterly PTB look-ahead was an initiative ACEC Illinois advocated for with IDOT, and we are excited to see the department moving forward with it.

Greater visibility will help firms make better decisions about staffing, teaming and pursuits well before a bulletin is advertised.

👁️ **What to watch:** IDOT plans to update both the six-month PTB look-ahead and construction letting look-ahead quarterly, giving firms a more predictable view of upcoming work.

👋 IDOT Leadership Update

ACEC Illinois welcomes **Andrew Brinkerhoff, P.E.**, who became **IDOT's Bureau Chief of Design and Environment** effective October 1. Brinkerhoff brings more than 16 years of experience across IDOT, FHWA, consulting and municipal government, with a background in design, environmental review, project development and program delivery. Most recently, he served as **Director of Program Development for FHWA's Illinois Division**.

At the same time, we congratulate **Jack Elston** on his retirement and thank him for his many years of service to both the **State of Illinois and our country**. Jack has been a valued partner to the engineering community, and we appreciate the leadership, experience and public service he brought to IDOT.

We look forward to working with Andrew in his new role and wish Jack all the best in retirement.

🏗️ Bipartisan Permitting Reform Gets New Life in Washington



A long-running effort to speed up federal permitting may finally have some momentum.

On September 30, the Republican chairs and Democratic ranking members of two key Senate committees introduced the **Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act**, a broad permitting reform package aimed at accelerating major energy and infrastructure projects. The proposal would establish firmer timelines for environmental reviews, improve coordination among federal agencies and place new limits on some legal challenges to approved projects.

Why it matters: For engineering firms, permitting delays can mean years between planning, design and construction. The legislation could affect transmission, renewable and conventional energy, data centers, mining and other major infrastructure projects — potentially creating greater certainty around project schedules and delivery.

Zoom in: The Senate proposal would establish a **two-year deadline for Environmental Impact Statements and a one-year deadline for Environmental Assessments**. It would also address interstate transmission siting and regional transmission planning, along with provisions aimed at allocating certain transmission costs associated with large new energy users such as data centers.

What ACEC is saying: ACEC supports bipartisan permitting reform that can shorten project delivery timelines, improve coordination among reviewing agencies and provide greater certainty for infrastructure investment while maintaining appropriate environmental review and public involvement. ACEC National has urged Congress to move a permitting reform package to the president this year.

What to watch: A Senate vote is expected after the November elections, and lawmakers have indicated additional amendments are likely. Despite the bipartisan agreement, environmental-review provisions and limits on legal challenges are expected to remain points of debate.

Go deeper:

Reuters: [Senators strike bipartisan permitting deal](#)

ACEC National: [Engineering industry's response](#)

U.S. Senate: [Permitting reform fact sheet](#)

NITA Moves From Legislation to Implementation



The legislation was the big story last year. Now comes the harder part: building the new regional transit organization.

The Northern Illinois Transit Authority held its first board meeting September 10, electing **Tom Kotarac as its first chair** and naming **Jamie Rhee as interim executive director**. Rhee, who previously led Chicago's Department of Aviation, will help guide the agency through its startup period while the board conducts a national search for a permanent executive director.

◀ **Flashback:** The General Assembly created NITA as part of the landmark transit funding and governance package approved last year, providing an estimated \$1.2 billion in new annual operating funding for CTA, Metra and Pace.

Why it matters: For engineering firms, the transition is about much more than transit governance. NITA will play a central role in planning and overseeing one of the largest transportation capital programs in Illinois.

The region's current **2026–2030 capital program totals roughly \$9.25 billion**, including investment in the CTA Red Line Extension, Metra rolling stock and bridges, zero-emission bus infrastructure and station accessibility improvements.

And the longer-term need is substantially larger. Regional transit planners have estimated that roughly **\$4 billion per year for 20 years** would be needed to bring the system into a state of good repair — well above the current level of investment.

👁️ **What to watch:** How NITA approaches capital prioritization, project delivery and coordination among CTA, Metra and Pace as the new governance structure takes shape — and whether the transition changes how engineering and professional-services work is planned and procured.

🔗 Go deeper:

[NITA: Meet the agency's first board chair and interim executive director](#)

[NITA: Improving the system — regional capital investment](#)

[NITA: Transit funding overview](#)

Catch Up

1. 🚧 USDOT Finalizes Major DBE Rule Changes

USDOT has [finalized changes](#) to the federal **Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program**, replacing race- and sex-based presumptions of disadvantage with individualized determinations of social and economic disadvantage.

Why it matters: The change directly affects firms participating in federally funded transportation work, including projects with IDOT, the Tollway, transit agencies and airports. Existing and prospective DBE firms must demonstrate individual social and economic disadvantage, while prime consultants will need to watch how the changes affect team composition and DBE compliance.

📌 **One important clarification:** Unlike some of the initial guidance surrounding the 2025 interim rule, the final framework allows applicants to reference their race, ethnicity, sex or gender in their personal narratives when those characteristics are relevant to specific

experiences that demonstrate social disadvantage. Those characteristics, however, no longer provide an automatic presumption of eligibility.

✓ **Illinois is ahead of the curve:** Illinois has completed its DBE recertification reevaluation process and is among roughly 30 states that have completed the process nationally. IDOT says it now has a certified pool of DBE firms and is moving forward with DBE goals on projects.

👁️ **What to watch:** How the revised narrative standard is applied in practice — and whether the new eligibility requirements ultimately change the number or availability of certified DBE firms for upcoming transportation procurements.

2. 🏢 IDOC Megaproject Tests Progressive Design-Build

Illinois' \$1.1 billion [RISE IDOC](#) project in Crest Hill is moving forward as one of the state's biggest tests yet of Progressive Design-Build.

Why it matters: The project is significant on its own, but the delivery model may matter even more for engineering firms. How CDB structures team selection, designer participation and risk on RISE IDOC could influence how Progressive Design-Build is used on future state capital projects.

👁️ **What to watch:** Whether lessons from RISE IDOC become a template for other large CDB procurements.

3. 💧 PFAS Rules Move Closer to Federal Approval

U.S. EPA is moving toward approval of [Illinois' revised drinking-water program](#) incorporating federal PFAS standards, with public comments open through **October 30**.

Why it matters: For Illinois water systems, PFAS is increasingly becoming a capital-planning issue. Monitoring requirements, treatment evaluations and potential infrastructure upgrades could create significant work for engineering firms.

⚠️ **The wrinkle:** Federal PFAS rules are still evolving, including possible changes to compliance timelines and standards for some compounds.

👁️ **What to watch:** How Illinois responds to any final federal changes — and how quickly utilities move from monitoring to treatment and capital investment.





Introducing Jennifer “Sis” Killen as IL/IN Area Operations Manager

I’m excited to announce that Jennifer “Sis” Killen is joining HDR as the Illinois/Indiana Area Operations Manager. Sis is a graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she received a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering. Additionally, in 2019, Sis completed the Civic Leadership Academy at the University of Chicago.

Sis has been working at the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways for the past 14+ years and has accomplished great things in her time there. In 2013, Sis was the first female Assistant Superintendent and later became the first female Superintendent in 2021. Prior to her time in public service, she spent 13 years in consulting.



For 14 years, Sis was part of the Host Committee for the Oak Lawn Multiple Sclerosis Walk. The committee helped coordinate the inaugural walk locations and grew participation to the level where it is now led by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Since 2018, Sis has also been a part of the Host Committee for Lake Katherine Nature Center’s annual monarch butterfly festival. The funds raised at this event support education programs at the nature center and community groups.

One of Sis’s favorite past-times is being a dedicated sideline cheerleader for her three children over past 11 years, in both club and school sports. In terms of travel, Sis says her favorite destination is Aruba! The weather is perfect – sunny, 82 degrees, and a slight trade wind every day.

Sis is excited to step into this new role at HDR and shared, “As the IL/IN Area Manager, I’m looking forward to celebrating and growing the people behind the projects to elevate the HDR brand and prominence in the industry. Building up people and teams is my professional passion.”

Please help me welcome Sis as she begins the next chapter of her career with HDR.

Joe Drimmel - North Central Regional Director of Operations



EFK MOEN TEAM UPDATE: Anne Hevrdejs Promotion

EFK Moen is excited to announce that Anne Hevrdejs, PE has been named manager of the firm’s Fairview Heights, Illinois office. Since joining EFK Moen, Anne has demonstrated outstanding technical expertise, project leadership, and dedication to client service. In her

new role, she will oversee office operations and growth while supporting the firm's expanding transportation and infrastructure practice throughout Illinois.

With more than nine years of civil engineering experience, Anne specializes in roadway design, transportation improvements, and infrastructure rehabilitation. Her expertise includes roadway geometric design, intersection and interchange design, maintenance of traffic planning, safety analysis, and advanced design and modeling using OpenRoads Designer. She has successfully delivered new construction, reconstruction, and rehabilitation projects for state and local transportation agencies.

Anne has played key roles on numerous projects for the Illinois Department of Transportation, including roadway design for the IL 14 add lane project in Benton, roadway plans for various culvert replacement and bridge repair projects, and reconstruction of the Chain of Rocks Road and IL 111 intersection. Known for managing complex transportation projects and collaborating effectively with stakeholders, she consistently delivers practical, high-quality engineering solutions.

EFK Moen, LLC is a D/WBE Civil Engineering Design Consulting Firm, with emphasis in transportation and bridge engineering and professional land surveying. Services are provided to a wide range of clients in both public and private sectors. We have offices in St. Louis, St. Charles, MO, Fairview Heights, IL, Chicago and Atlanta. For more information, go to www.efkmoen.com

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EFK MOEN TEAM UPDATE: Jesse Jonas/ACE Acquisition

EFK Moen is proud to announce the acquisition of All Civil Engineering, a strategic move that strengthens the firm's construction management capabilities and expands its presence in the St. Louis market. The acquisition brings together two organizations with a shared commitment to delivering high-quality infrastructure and transportation projects throughout the region.

As part of the acquisition, EFK Moen has welcomed four experienced construction management professionals from All Civil Engineering to its St. Louis office. Their expertise in construction oversight, project coordination, quality assurance, and client service enhances the firm's ability to support a growing portfolio of transportation, municipal, and infrastructure projects while continuing to provide exceptional service to clients and partners.

Leading the transition is Jesse Jonas, who joins EFK Moen as Construction Manager. Jonas brings decades of industry experience, having served with the Missouri Department of Transportation as Resident Engineer, and St. Louis County as Regional Construction Engineer and Chief Materials Engineer. He is also a regional ADA trainer on PROWAG design and construction compliance. Under his leadership, EFK Moen is well positioned to continue its growth and deliver successful project outcomes throughout the St. Louis region.



We're Moving!

InNova Consulting, Inc. is pleased to announce that our headquarters is moving to **185 N. Franklin St., 2nd Floor, Chicago, IL 60606**, effective October 1.

Located in the heart of downtown Chicago, our new headquarters provides a central location to better serve our clients, collaborate with industry partners, and stay connected to the communities and projects we serve.

Our Lincolnwood and Palos Heights offices will remain in place, continuing to support our team and clients across the Chicago metropolitan area.

We look forward to this exciting next chapter and welcoming you to our new headquarters.

Stay tuned for details about our upcoming open house.



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



TWM Recognized Among St. Louis' Fastest-Growing Companies & Largest Engineering Firms

Employee-owned engineering & geospatial firm earns recognition in two 2026 St. Louis Business Journal rankings

Swansea, IL – TWM, a 100% employee-owned civil engineering and geospatial firm, has been recognized in two 2026 *St. Louis Business Journal* rankings, earning a spot among the

region's fastest-growing private companies and largest engineering firms.

TWM ranked No. 47 on the 2026 Fast 50, which recognizes the 50 fastest-growing private companies in the St. Louis region. The ranking reflects 28.97% revenue growth from 2023 to 2025, with TWM reporting \$36.24 million in 2025 revenue.

"Behind every number is a great team," said Kelly Ralston, TWM's Director of Business Development, who attended the 2026 Fast 50 awards ceremony at City Winery St. Louis and accepted the recognition on behalf of the firm. "It's an exciting time to be part of TWM, and there's a lot of energy behind what we're building."

TWM was also listed among the largest engineering firms in the St. Louis region, ranking No. 13 based on 2025 local engineering billings. The annual ranking highlights engineering firms serving the St. Louis metropolitan area and surrounding counties in Missouri and Illinois.

"Both of these rankings reflect how far TWM has come, but we're just as focused on where we're going," shared TWM Chief Operating Officer, Derek Twente, PLS, EI. "We want to keep expanding on our strengths, give our employee-owners room to grow, and pursue initiatives that make sense for TWM's expertise and vision."

Robert DeConcini, PE, President of TWM, added, "Our steady growth and achievements are a direct reflection of TWM's entire team. After 80 years, we know the importance of making thoughtful investments, maintaining trusted partnerships, and delivering the service and value our clients expect."

As TWM continues to grow and look toward the future, it remains grounded in the values and principles that have guided the firm for generations: investing in great people and innovative technologies, supporting strong client relationships, and opening doors to new opportunities. That common purpose will continue to carry TWM forward in the years ahead.

About TWM, Inc.

Celebrating 80 years in business in 2026, TWM is a 100% ESOP-owned company. From humble beginnings in Belleville, IL in 1946, TWM has grown to be the successful firm it is today, with corporate headquarters in Swansea, IL, and nine additional offices throughout the Midwest and Southeast. The firm provides innovative and comprehensive solutions in five primary disciplines: Survey/Geospatial Services, Transportation, Land Development, Structural, and Water Infrastructure. Built on a foundation of strong relationships and technical excellence, TWM delivers on its mission of **Exceptional Service. Nothing Less.** Learn more about TWM at twm-inc.com.

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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



Email Emily today!

UPCOMING EVENTS...

ACEC ILLINOIS



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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](#).

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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