

ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

ACEC

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES
of South Carolina



2027 | CALL FOR ENTRIES



ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The American Council of Engineering Companies' (ACEC) annual Engineering Excellence Awards (EEA) competition recognizes engineering firms for projects that demonstrate an exceptional degree of innovation, complexity, achievement and value.

ACEC National EEA Competition

American engineering firms have entered their most innovative and complex projects and studies in competitions conducted by state member organizations (MOs). Qualifying projects at the state MO level are then eligible to participate in the ACEC national competition. Deadline for the [national competition](#) is [Wednesday, January 6, 2027](#).

EEA entries are accepted into one of 12 project categories:

- Studies, Research and Consulting Engineering Services
- Building/Technology Systems
- Structural Systems
- Surveying and Mapping Technology
- Environmental
- Waste and Storm Water
- Water Resources
- Transportation
- Special Projects
- Small Projects
- Energy
- Industrial and Manufacturing Processes and Facilities

A distinguished panel of 25-30 judges possessing a vast array of built environment and technical expertise will be convened over three days to evaluate and rank submissions for engineering excellence. The panel then selects top award winners—8 Grand Awards and 16 Honor Awards. One Grand Conceptor Award will be selected from the Grand Award winners as the overall best engineering project.

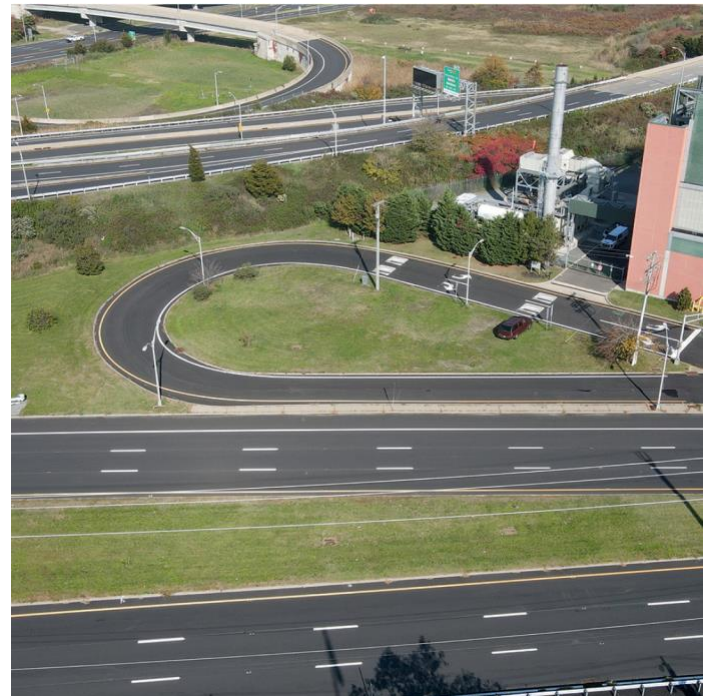
Projects from all across the world are rated for uniqueness and/or innovative application of new or existing techniques; future value to and enhancing public awareness/enthusiasm for the engineering profession; social, economic, and sustainable development considerations; complexity; and successful fulfillment of client/owner's needs, including schedule and budget.

Top Award Winners (Grand and Honor) **MUST HAVE** a firm and/or client representative in attendance to receive on-stage recognition at the Gala. National Recognition Award Winners will also receive a special tribute during a Gala.

All Grand and Grand Conceptor winners will resubmit a digital copy of the photographic digital panel. Specifications: JPEG file; RGB format; High Resolution (300 dpi).

Every year, ACEC's EEA Gala provides firms with national recognition and a venue to showcase their talent and expertise in a dramatic setting. The annual black-tie EEA Gala—to be held Tuesday, April 20, 2027—celebrates, with pride and elegance, the most outstanding project achievements of the engineering profession.

All National Recognition Award Winners will be showcased during the EEA Gala awards program in Washington DC.



2026 Palmetto Award Winner

Michael Baker International

“I-26 Emergency Bridge Repair Over Lake Bowen”



ACEC-SC Engineering Excellence Awards Project Submission Form

ELIGIBILITY

Any engineering or surveying firm is eligible to enter the awards program, regardless of whether the firm is a member of ACEC-SC.

GENERAL CRITERIA

- 1 Both member and non-member firm entries must be submitted to the ACEC national competition through an ACEC state MO.
- 2 Each entry should be submitted to the state MO in accordance with local entry rules. Contact your state ACEC MO office for details. Entries submitted to the ACEC national competition must be electronically submitted in accordance with the rules and requirements outlined in this brochure.
- 3 Each state MO may submit 10 entries from its membership. If more than 10 were submitted at the state level, the state MO may submit an additional entry for each five submitted above the 10. Any non-member entry judged to be a legitimate candidate may be submitted by the state MO for the national competition; however, the non-member submittals

will count in the total submittal limitations outlined.

- 4 Engineering or surveying projects that have won awards in other state or national organizations' programs are welcome in the ACEC EEA competition.

- 5 Projects entered in the competition may have been executed anywhere in the world. Studies and Research (Category A) or Surveying and Mapping projects (Category D) must have been publicly disclosed by the client between Nov. 1, 2024 and Oct. 31, 2026. Construction of projects (Categories B through L with the exception of D) must have been ready for use between Nov. 1, 2024 and Oct. 31, 2026.

- 6 Entries in the national competition may be placed in any one of the 12 categories. See “Categories” section for the full listing of all eligible categories. The entering firm must select the one category that is most appropriate. A project may be entered only once by the entering firm in any category. The same project may be

entered in a different category by a different entering firm. However, after a project has been entered in Category A, and the project has been constructed, the project may be entered by the same firm in a different category – B through L – in the year when eligible.

- 7 Each entry must consist of two components:
 - Official entry form submitted at <https://eea.acec.org/south-carolina>
 - Photographic display panel

Non-compliance with the rules may disqualify an entry. Please read the requirements thoroughly.

Note: See “Preparing Your Entry” for the Engineering Excellence Awards.

- 8 ACEC-SC will not be responsible for any damages to or loss of an entrant's official entry, photographic display panel, or anything else submitted by entrant.

- 9 The ACEC-SC Engineering Excellence Awards committee reserves the right to determine, and change if necessary, the eligibility and category classification of any entry.



ACEC National EEA Competition

JUDGING

Entries will be judged on the basis of:

- Overall engineering excellence
- The work performed by the entering firm only
- The rating guidelines listed

Winners and affiliated state MOs will be notified shortly after judging is completed.

AWARDS

All submissions to the National completion will receive a National Recognition Award. 24 projects move forward into the Grand and Honor award categories. The panel of judges will select 24 awards at their discretion – 8 Grand and 16 Honor Awards. A Grand Conceptor Award will be selected from the 8 Grand Award winners. The Grand Conceptor will be announced at the Gala as the top national winner selected by the judges, whose decisions on all awards are final. Awards will be presented to the clients/owners and entering firms submitting the winning entries.

PUBLICITY

The public relations and marketing value of participation in the national EEA program is substantial. All national winners will be highlighted in ACEC's public relations program, which benefits all U.S. engineering firms. Working with participating firms and state MOs, ACEC will reach out to local media to announce your winning project and awards. All award winners are free to publicize their achievement. The Grand Conceptor Award winner however will be remaining secret until the Gala.

Through national and state efforts, display panels can be exhibited in such public venues as city and state administrative buildings, universities, shopping centers and office buildings. These activities enhance direct business development benefits for both local and national award winners. Further benefits are gained through feature stories presented in firm brochures, newsletters and other publications.

ACEC-SC EEA Competition

RATING GUIDELINES FOR JUDGING

Each entrant's contribution will be evaluated based on the following five categories, which are key elements of the project description text required in the electronic submittal described below.

1. Uniqueness and/or Innovative Applications of New or Existing Techniques:

- Does the entrant's contribution to the project demonstrate the use of a new science or a breakthrough in the general knowledge of engineering?
- Does the entrant's contribution to the project represent a unique application of new or existing technology, techniques, materials or equipment?

2. Future Value to the Engineering Profession and Enhanced Public Awareness/Enthusiasm of the role of engineering:

- Will the entrant's contribution to the project redefine current engineering thinking?
- Does the entrant's project increase public awareness/enthusiasm about the role of engineering in their everyday lives?

3. Social, Economic and Sustainable Development Considerations:

- Do the solutions identified produce secondary benefits of value to the community environment?
- Does the entrant's approach provide society with social, economic, or sustainable development benefits?
- Does the entrant's contribution to the project improve the health, safety or welfare of the public or affected environment?

CALL FOR ENTRIES - CATEGORIES

CATEGORY A: Studies, Research and Consulting Engineering Services

Non-design services, projects not involving the preparation of construction documents consisting of but not limited to the following types of projects:

- New products, materials and technologies
- Expert testimony
- Basic research and studies
- Computer/software technology
- Technical papers
- Public outreach/involvement
- Water conservation
- Security plans

- Project feasibility studies/economic/risk
- Value engineering

CATEGORY B: Building/Technology Systems

- Mechanical/electrical/plumbing
- Computer/technology
- Communications
- Acoustics
- Software systems
- Sustainability or carbon neutrality
- Efficiency certification standards, e.g. LEED®
- Energy efficiency - new and retrofit
- Secure facilities (military/research/correctional)

CATEGORY C: Structural Systems

- Foundations
- Tunnels
- Buildings
- Seismic design
- Towers
- Bridges
- Stadiums

CATEGORY D: Surveying and Mapping Technology

- Geometrics, ALTA, land title and rights surveys
- Control, GPS, monitoring or construction surveying
- Survey mapping, GIS/LIS, photogrammetry

CATEGORY E: Environmental

- Hazardous waste
- Solid waste
- Restoration/reclamation/remediation
- Air quality
- Noise
- Recycling
- Waste pond management
- Carbon sequestration and trading
- Mitigation

CATEGORY F: Waste and Storm Water

- Wastewater collection/treatment and disposal
- Residuals management and reuse
- Graywater systems
- CSOs
- Mine tailings
- Agricultural
- Storm water management
- Erosion control

CATEGORY G: Water Resources

- Hydraulics, hydrology
- Surface and groundwater supply development
- Treatment
- Transmission, distribution & storage
- Watershed management
- Water use reduction
- Flood risk management
- Climate adaptation
- Coastal and eco-system restoration
- Locks/dams/water control structures
- Irrigation

2027 CALL FOR ENTRIES

4. Complexity:

- Did the entrant's efforts successfully address highly complex criteria or unique problems?
- Were extraordinary problems of site, location, hazardous conditions, project requirements, or similar elements present?
- Did the entrant's solutions require the use of out-of-the-ordinary technology or ingenuity for achievement of the project's goals?

5. Successful Fulfillment of Client/Owner Needs:

- Did the entrant successfully engage the client/owner in the overall project development process?
- Did the entrant introduce an economical and cost-effective solution?
- How did the final cost compare to the original budget estimate?
- How closely does the entrant's solution meet the total goals of the client/owner?
- Did the entrant meet the client's time schedule?

PREPARING YOUR ENTRY

This section describes all required submission materials for entering the 2026 ACEC-SC EEA competition. All materials must be submitted exactly as designated below. Digital files must be PC compatible and appropriate to the information being submitted (i.e., Microsoft Word for text, high resolution JPEGs, photos or other images, PowerPoint, Adobe PDFs, etc.).

If the submission does not meet the requirements listed, it may be disqualified.

If any part of an entry does not meet requirements listed, that portion of the entry may not be presented for judging. **Please follow the guidelines.**

No reference to other awards is permitted in your submitted materials.

In any given year, an entry may be submitted through only one state MO. If a project was entered in more than one MO competition, **it is the responsibility of the affected MOs** to decide which one will enter the project in the national competition.

DATES TO REMEMBER

(ACEC-SC) October 23, 2026 --- Notice of Intent is due to ACEC-SC HQ at 826 Assembly St., Columbia, SC 29201.

(ACEC-SC) November 20, 2026 --- Submitted materials **MUST BE RECEIVED** by ACEC-SC. Materials received after this date will **NOT** be accepted. Mailing address: 826 Assembly St., Columbia, SC 29201.

(ACEC-SC) March 9, 2027 --- EEA Gala in Columbia, SC, from 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM.

(National) January 6, 2027 --- Submitted materials **MUST BE RECEIVED** by ACEC. Materials received after this date will **NOT** be accepted.

All materials submitted for judging in the national competition become the property of ACEC and may be used in ACEC publications, in addition to all other internal or external promotional or educational purposes. **Submitted materials will NOT be returned.**

(National) January 12, 2027 --- The entrant's company representative, as listed on the entry form, must be available by phone.

(National) February 19-21, 2027 --- Judging takes place in Chantilly, VA.

(National) April 20, 2027 --- EEA Dinner and Gala Awards Program in Washington, D.C.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The following **two main components must be submitted** with the national EEA competition entry:

- Official entry
- Photographic display panel

****NOTE: No QR Codes or embedded links are permitted in any portion of an award submission****

CATEGORY H:

Transportation

- Highways
- Rail
- Airports
- Marine/ports
- Public transit
- Intermodal facilities

CATEGORY I:

Special Projects

- Safety and security
- Corrosion protection/cathodic protection
- Program and construction management
- Land development
- Trenchless technologies/directional boring
- Recreational facilities
- Subsurface engineering

CATEGORY J:

Small Projects

- Total project construction budget does not exceed \$2.5 million. At the entrant's discretion, except for entries in Category A, projects under \$2.5 million are not limited to this category

CATEGORY K:

Energy

- Transmission and distribution
- Power generation
- Renewable energy
- Cogeneration
- Energy storage technologies
- Energy usage reduction programs
- Demand side management

CATEGORY L:

Industrial and Manufacturing Processes and Facilities

- Petrochemical
- Biotech
- Manufacturing
- Heavy industry
- Industrial waste
- Materials handling
- Mining, metallurgy, mineralogy



I. OFFICIAL ENTRY

All project information shall be submitted to via the online EEA

Portal here: <https://eea.acec.org/south-carolina>

Below outlines the materials that must be uploaded on this Portal.

1 PROJECT SUBMISSION FORM

Original completed entry form must be signed by both the entrant and the client/owner (senior executives/officials), stating that the submitted project was substantially completed and ready for use between Nov. 1, 2024 and Oct. 31, 2026. Electronic signatures are accepted.

2 CLIENT/OWNER LETTER (one page max.) Letter addressed to ACEC-SC Describing the relationship of the client/owner and entrant in the development of the project, the project is ready to use, and how the entrant's contribution exceeded the client/owner's needs. *Specifications:* PDF format.

3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (one page max.) Overview of project. Describe the problem and solution. Project title and entry category must appear at the top of the page. *Specifications:* 8.5" x 11"; 1" side margins; single-spaced text; 12 pt. minimum size font; PDF format.

4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION (six pages max.) Tell the story of the project. Address items a, b, c, and d as listed below. Project title, entry category, and page number must appear at the top of each page. Entrants may use text, photos, graphics, or charts as needed. *Specifications:* 8.5" x 11"; 1" side margins; single-spaced text; 12 pt. minimum size font; PDF format.
Text must include all of the following information, including budget information and Summary:

- ROLE OF ENTRANT'S FIRM** in the project.
- ROLE OF OTHER CONSULTANTS** participating in the project.
- ENTRANT'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROJECT:**
A brief description of the entrant's contribution addressing each of the following Rating Guidelines (refer to "**Rating Guideline Definitions**" on pages 4 and 5 for detailed rating and judging information):
 - **Uniqueness and/or innovative application of new or existing techniques.**
 - **Future value to the engineering profession and enhanced public awareness/enthusiasm of the role of engineering.**

- **Social, economic, and sustainable development considerations.**
- **Complexity.**
- **Successful fulfillment of client/owner needs.**

*Include total project construction budget cost, total project construction actual cost, entrant's portion of the total project construction budget cost, entrant's portion of the total project construction actual cost, and project scheduled and actual dates of completion (as indicated on the Electronic Project Submission Form). **Reminder: These costs are not Engineering Fees.***

- SUMMARY:** Describe in layman's terms why this project is worthy of special recognition (word count between 100 - 500 words). Explain all factors that exhibit the project's uniqueness and complexity, such as innovative engineering, challenges faced and overall social impact. **NOTE:** This summary may provide the basis for all ACEC publicity on the project.

5 KEY PARTICIPANTS

List the key participants on the project including firm name, address, phone number, website, and e-mail address of each participant. Include contractors, subcontractors, other engineers, architects and designers significantly involved in the project. *Specifications:* 8.5" x 11"; Excel file.

6 PHOTOS OR GRAPHICS

Six different photos or graphics (one per page) with captions describing the subject matter (refer to "**Image Guidelines**" below). Captions shall begin with: Photo 1, Photo 2, etc. *Specifications:* JPEG file; RGB format; High Resolution (300 dpi).
Photo Captions: Type in the captions in a small text box under each photo. No text is permitted on the photos.

A digital copy of the photographic digital panel **MUST** also be included with your submission. *Specifications:* JPEG file; RGB format; High Resolution (300 dpi).

IMAGE GUIDELINES:

Because the images will be projected on a large screen during the EEA gala, it is very important to submit sharp, high-quality, high-resolution images.

Three of the photographs must show the completed project and provide the highest level of visual impact for publicity. Three of the photographs must display the planning, startup, and/or construction phases of the project.



7 PRESS RELEASE (two pages max.)
Press release that clearly and concisely describes the project and the entrant's participation, based on information presented in the Project Description. Also describe the value of the project to the community including information such as the number of people served, cost savings, etc. Do not reference other awards the project has won. *Specifications:* double-spaced; 8.5" x 11"; PDF format.

9 SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT
Include a supplementary report containing the findings portrayed with text, graphs, or photos, as needed.
NOTE: This report is **ONLY** required for Category A submittals.

REMINDER: ACEC-SC HAS MOVED TO THE EAA PORTAL, ALL ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED AT <https://eea.acec.org/south-carolina>

III. DISPLAY PANEL

IMPORTANT: Dis<https://eea.acec.org/south-carolinaplay>
Panel is a key part of the project submittal and the text and photos should demonstrate the challenges, solutions, innovation, complexity and unique aspects of key project elements. The panel should be prepared with high-quality photos and graphics and with text as described below. **NOTE: A digital copy of the photographic digital panel MUST be submitted with your upload on the SC EEA PORTAL. Specifications: JPEG file; RGB format; High Resolution (300 dpi).**

PHOTOGRAPHIC PANEL REQUIREMENTS:

- 1. PANEL SIZE:** One photographic panel, 30"x30" square display material with 5 mil matte laminate over the front and mounted on 3/16 Gator Board.
****NOTE:** Panel requirements differ from national due to the panels being displayed at various ACEC-SC events throughout the year.
NOTE: If production/printing services for your photographic display panel are not available in your community, contact Adam Jones at ACEC-SC for sources.
- 2. PHOTOS/GRAPHICS:** Maximum of 6 photos and/or graphics shall be used on the panel. Each image shall be a minimum of 7" x 5" or 35 square inches in area. A background photo is not considered a photograph.
- 3. TEXT/FONTS:** Panel text may not exceed 250 words total, not including captions. Font sizes: 32 pt. minimum font for text or descriptions; 28 pt. minimum font for captions and graphics.
- 4. REQUIRED ELEMENTS:** The front of the panel shall also include the EEA logo (download from ACEC website), title and location of the project or study, client/ owner's name and location, and entering firm's name and location (minimum 32 pt. font size).
- 5. BACK OF PANEL LABEL:** Add a label to the back of the panel with the name of the entrant's firm, the firm address, the project name, and the entry category.

PANEL PREPARATION AVAILABLE

If you need assistance producing your photographic display panel in the Columbia, SC, area, we recommend Columbia Printing and Graphics, ApexGraphics, or ARC Document Solutions. Any printer may be used, however. These are suggestions for those seeking help.

SHIPPING

Photographic display panels **MUST NOT BE ROLLED** for shipping, but instead use a flat shipping box.

All materials including the electronic submission must be received by November 20, 2026.

Ship Photographic display panel to:

Anne Heiler
ACEC-SC
826 Assembly Street
Columbia, SC 29201

2027 CALL FOR ENTRIES

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR EEA ENTRY

ACEC South Carolina is now on the National EEA Portal! All entries must be submitted electronically via [this portal](#). A fee of \$650 per entry for ACEC-SC members (\$1,050 for non-ACEC-SC members). All payments must be submitted with Notice of Intent.

For any questions, please contact anne@acecsc.org

1. Go to <https://eea.acec.org/south-carolina>

Award Application South Carolina

Please enter your email address to proceed.

Email address

Email

Proceed

2. Enter your email address.

3. Select 'New Application' from the top right corner.

+ New Application

4. Fill out all required fields about the submission.

5. Click the green 'Submit Final Project Application' button at the bottom.

Save Project Application for Later

Submit Final Project Application

Cancel

6. In the list view, click the red 'generate a pdf button' next to your entry to download a copy of your responses.

#	Application Name	Last Changed	Status	Action
1.	test[NEW PROJECT]	25-Sep-25 08:54 AM	Complete	Edit Application  

7. Then, click the green 'Upload Project Files' button next to your entry to attach your materials
*Please note that an application is **NOT** finalized without these attachments.

#	Application Name	Last Changed	Status	Action
1.	test[NEW PROJECT]	25-Sep-25 08:54 AM	Complete	Edit Application  

8. Upload your materials. View pages 6 and 7 of this document for specifications.

9. Click 'Finish & Final Submit' at the bottom once all materials have been uploaded.

All submission payments must be made online.

Save & Finish Later

Finish & Final Submit

You must also mail a Physical Display Board to:

ACEC South Carolina
826 Assembly St
Columbia, SC 29201

10. If you wish to submit another entry, follow these same steps.

11. Don't forget to mail or drop off your physical display board(s) to ACEC-SC HQ (826 Assembly St, Columbia, SC 29201)

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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