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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF ACEC WI

A Closer Look at ACEC WI

The American Council of Engineering Companies of Wisconsin is the only organization in the state that represents the business side of the professional engineering industry. ACEC WI represents 83 premier engineering firms, employing more than 3,600 employees in more than 160 offices across the state.

Our primary mission is to strengthen the business environment of our member firms through advocacy, political action, and business education. ACEC WI helps its member firms achieve higher professional, business and economic standards, which results in a better professional engineering service for their clients.

As an organization, ACEC WI is dedicated to ensuring the public is aware of the crucial role professional engineers play in serving Wisconsin communities through extraordinary and innovative design. ACEC WI members continually step up to the challenges inherent with each project working with industry partners to successfully engineer the vision of their clients.

In addition to our member resources in Wisconsin, we are a member organization of ACEC – a national federation with more than 5,000 firms representing more than 500,000 employees throughout the country. ACEC works tirelessly to propel the nation's economy and enhance and safeguard America's quality of life. These efforts allow Americans to drink clean water, enjoy a healthy life, take advantage of new technologies, and travel safely and efficiently. The Council's mission is to contribute to America's prosperity and welfare by advancing the business interests of member firms.

The important work our member companies do for our state's infrastructure, economy and quality of life is the lifeblood of this organization and I am excited to celebrate those achievements at this year's Engineering Excellence Awards.
Like the Academy Awards for the film industry, the Engineering Excellence Awards highlight the best of the best in professional engineering. ACEC WI’s Engineering Excellence Awards program recognizes and celebrates engineering achievements that demonstrate the highest degree of skill and ingenuity. Established in 1970, this statewide competition effectively ensures firms achieve the recognition they so richly deserve.

Through exceptional engineering design, these award-winning projects significantly contribute to the quality of life of the state’s citizens. They also recognize the design professionals involved for their expertise and dedication to the profession. The 2018 winners strengthened our infrastructure, enhanced public safety and bolstered the economy.

The winning projects are as diverse as the firms involved. This year’s projects come from across the state and beyond. Entries range greatly but one element each has in common is the value professional engineers provide their clients and communities.

From safe drinking water to getting us to and from work and school, engineers touch our daily lives in ways that often go unnoticed. The Engineering Excellence Awards program strives to increase the public’s knowledge of what professional engineers really do and recognize professional engineering as a respected and essential profession.

An Engineering Excellence Award is a tribute not only to the winning project and design firm, but also to the clients, owners, subconsultants, contractors and everyone else who played a role in making these projects a reality.
Judging & Awards

A panel of highly qualified judges from diverse backgrounds outside the association's membership reviewed this year's entries. Each entry was judged on its own merits and specifically on the role of the engineering firm submitting the project. The process involved a combination of individual review of entry materials, group discussion and deliberation.

The panel used the following criteria to evaluate each submission:

- Original or innovative application of new or existing techniques
- Future value to the engineering profession and perception by the public
- Social, economic, and sustainable design considerations
- Complexity
- Exceeding client/owner needs

Each entry was truly an example of excellence in engineering, which made the judges’ deliberation extremely difficult.

The award winning projects, firms and clients will be honored at the ACEC WI Awards Banquet. All are invited to celebrate these award-winning projects at the gala event on March 23, 2018 at The American Club in Kohler, Wisconsin.

Congratulations to all our award-winning firms and clients on your outstanding projects!

The following 2018 Engineering Excellence Awards were presented:

State Finalist Award

State Finalist Awards are presented to entries demonstrating a high degree of client satisfaction through quality, cost-effective solutions. This year, ACEC WI presented eight State Finalist Awards.

Best of State Award

Best of State Awards are presented to entries representing the highest degree of technical innovation, client satisfaction and contributions to the engineering industry. Best of State winners are eligible to compete in the ACEC National Engineering Excellence Awards competition. This year, ACEC WI presented four Best of State Awards.

Small Firm Award

Significant Contribution on a Project by a Small Firm Awards are presented to entries from small firms celebrating their successful major contribution to projects. This year, ACEC WI presented one Significant Contribution on a Project by a Small Firm Award.

Grand Award

Grand Award is selected from the Best of State winners. It is the entry the judges felt best represented the spirit and criteria of the competition. The Grand Award will be announced for the first time at the March 23 Awards Banquet.

Qualifications-Based Selection Projects

A number of the award-winning projects were procured using Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS). On the following pages, a QBS label indicates projects that were procured using QBS. QBS is a proven process to help owners find the highest-qualified engineering or architectural firm or team for a project. Page 21 of this magazine provides information on the QBS process. Additional Information is available at www.qbswi.org.

2018 Engineering Excellence Awards Judging Panel

Tom Buchholz  
Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Jerry Deschane  
League of Wisconsin Municipalities

Jacob Ehmke, PE  
Wisconsin Department of Administration

Mark Herr, AIA, NCARB  
Plunkett Raysich Architects

Steve Kalinosky  
US Forest Service – the National Forest Products Laboratory

Bill Sturtevant  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Dan Talarczyk, PLS, PE  
Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District

Anna Varney, PE  
FHWA Wisconsin Division

Errin Welty, CEcD  
Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
The City of Madison Water Utility set out with a complex goal in mind – to convert a 55,000 gallon water tower into one that could provide 1.3 million gallons of water storage for multiple pressure zones. Additionally, one portion of this was needed for constant residential usage while the other was for fire emergencies only. This was a massive expansion which was compounded by the need to stay on a similar footprint to the old structure.

Short Elliott Hendrickson stepped up with multiple design alternatives. Since any solution needed to feed two different pressure zones, the design team knew that there would either be multiple structures or a single segmented tower. In the end, a single tower with two zones reduced operational costs by 20 percent over the lifecycle and reduced the footprint of the overall project. This is the first dual zone water tower in Wisconsin and one of only a handful in the United States.

Part of the design constraints were working with the various stakeholders. Telecoms systems hosted on the old structure needed to be maintained. The design team worked with nearby residents and the Friends of Lake View Park organization to minimize construction disturbances and create a structure with an appealing aesthetic. On top of that, there were additional design restrictions because of the nearby airport and FAA rules.

Said awards judge Tom Buchholz: “Short Elliott Hendrickson assembled a team that worked collaboratively with the Madison Water Utility to improve long term water storage requirements for static and fire protection pressures and along with additional water storage capacity while fitting into the neighborhood and community on the north side of Madison.”

Being the first of its kind in the state, Short Elliott Hendrickson defined innovation with its design all while effectively collaborating with multiple stakeholders. What was once a water tower that fed a single hospital has now become a dual zone plant providing improved service for both a growing neighborhood and emergency response.
Madison Water Utility decided to redesign its existing Operations Center to become more environmentally friendly and to streamline activities. This new facility and overall site redevelopment meant that steps had to be taken to remove the pollutants being generated by the construction activity and everyday operations. Unique site constraints and high standards led to some innovative solutions.

Mead & Hunt worked with the client on both the Operations Center redesign and on this specific stormwater project. Because of this connection, the design team was able to offer solutions that merged into the full project and worked better than a piecemeal approach.

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Mead & Hunt worked with the client on both the Operations Center redesign and on this specific stormwater project. Because of this connection, the design team was able to offer solutions that merged into the full project and worked better than a piecemeal approach. The problems facing the runoff problem were extensive. The site was extremely limited and had shallow groundwater levels because it was located between two lakes. A shallow sewer was impossible because the surface above could not support the continuous load of heavy trucks. Finally, the site contained contaminated groundwater and petroleum impacted soils which meant that more extensive stormwater treatment was needed as opposed to a non-contaminated site.

The design team’s solution was unique – an underground stormwater treatment vault. Created out of pre-cast concrete to prevent it from rising up towards the surface, the vault has a two-layer liner to prevent the surrounding contaminated groundwater from seeping in. The tank treats stormwater before it reaches local water resources. The tank even has a baffle which is a device that gathers the oil and grease runoff from the heavy trucks parked above. The lifespan of this tank is much longer than a typical retention basin and being underground saves space above for the actual operations center.

Awards judge Dan Talarczyk, PE, PLS said: “The stormwater component of this redevelopment project demonstrated an elegant solution to stormwater management on a congested urban site with limited area.”

With this innovative solution, the design team met the site’s needs and helped the client continue progress towards a more sustainable and environmentally friendly future.
The Memorial Union at UW-Madison is, for many, the heart of the university. A now historic building constructed in 1928, it has expanded to be an administrative hub, a student hangout, outdoor and indoor theaters and even a hotel. The project required extensive design work and collaboration with stakeholders. The redevelopment of the union was sensitive and required the design team to pay attention to the final aesthetic.

GRAEF broke down the design and construction of the improvements into two phases. In Phase I, the design team worked mostly on the theater in the union. By using a steel frame/composite floor system, the thickness was reduced which allowed for an enlarged play circle because it removed now unnecessary supports. The west wing of the facility was also simplified from its previous mismash of confusing hallways into a modern, inviting design.

Phase II was a more extensive remodel and required innovation from the design team. While many modern improvements were provided and quality of life changes made, the biggest upgrade was to the loading dock. A significant challenge was creating the loading dock ten feet below the water level of nearby Lake Monona. A special membrane and drainage system protects the dock from water seepage. The new dock features a truck turntable which significantly cuts down on the space needed for semi trucks to turn around. The turntable allows them to drive in and be rotated into the appropriate loading bay. It's estimated that this will save the university (and taxpayers) $300,000 a year.

Said awards judge Jerry Deschane: “GRAEF impressed me with their creative, and technically-brilliant solutions to the combined challenges presented by this project. Preserving a University of Wisconsin institution and at the same time making it more functional was a significant challenge in its own right. Layering over that underground semi-truck loading docks, served by turntable below the water table at this lakefront site is an incredible engineering feat.”

GRAEF’s improvements give new life to a historic building that represents the university and will help it form a central experience for future generations.
We congratulate the Village of Whitefish Bay on the success of this transformative project and are proud to be recognized alongside them.

VILLAGE OF WHITEFISH BAY
Fairmount Avenue Relief Sanitary Sewer

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The USH 18/151 is one of the key transportation crossroads in southern Wisconsin. Carrying up to 110,000 vehicles daily, $13 billion in freight annually and supporting 393 businesses within a half mile radius, its impact is far greater than a simple state highway interchange would suggest. Any design had to modernize the system to keep up with growing demand while keeping routes open during construction. The entire $2.2 billion project encompassed multiple interchanges, multi-modal paths and bridge reconstruction in less than a mile radius.

Strand Associates approached each of these problems with innovative design solutions. To facilitate bike and pedestrian traffic, two separate bridges and a tunnel were created to increase safety, reduce congestion and keep neighborhoods connected. A specialized jug-handle interchange design was put in at the intersection of USH 151 and a local road. The first of its kind in Wisconsin, it incorporates a roundabout underneath the highway and uses 2 million pounds of steel to support the structure above and improve roadway visibility. At the actual intersection between USH 18 and USH 151, the design team created a single-point urban interchange with offset piers. This is the first of its kind in the US. This design reduces traffic conflict points which speeds up the commute and lowers the risk of accidents. The two span structure above saves money and doesn't interfere with traffic. It is estimated this new design will save 250,000 hours of traveler delay annually.

Said awards judge Anna Varney, PE: “Even with all the engineering complexities, the needs of the community were incorporated in the project through context sensitive designs, as well as providing neighborhood connectivity and safety with improved mobility of the sidewalks, trails, paths, bus accommodations, and grade separated crossings, all while completing the project on schedule and under budget”.

This incredible project highlights both the complexity of transportation systems and the crucial role professional engineers play. The new design increases safety and decreases time wasted by drivers in traffic. Strand provided a great design for motorists, local businesses and pedestrians with multiple innovative solutions.
This multi-faceted Stage 1 project has positively impacted the economy and traveling public by significantly reducing traffic congestion, successfully increasing accessibility, and decreasing travel time for businesses, pedestrians, and vehicles in the corridor.

Major components of Stage 1 include construction of a specialized single-point urban interchange (SPUI), a jug-handle interchange with a roundabout directly under Verona Road, two new pedestrian bridges, a pedestrian tunnel near the SPUI, and the reconstruction of the Seminole Highway Bridge. The sheer magnitude of the reconstruction for the tight corridor (all of the major components except for one of the pedestrian bridges were within less than a 1-mile footprint), is incredibly substantial for any major artery.
A lot of work goes into designing and constructing engineering projects. But when you pair a complex project with the biggest construction project in Wisconsin’s history, the work increases exponentially. Himalayan Consultants utilized their expertise with small projects to integrate necessary infrastructure into the overall Zoo Interchange project.

The team was tasked with constructing public works facilities and necessary roadways. The first challenge faced was staging the project. All items need to be completed by winter because the primary facility was a salt dome. Through careful communication and deliberate staging, the design team was able to coordinate between the construction team, WisDOT and Milwaukee County to deliver on time. Himalayan was also able to mitigate the overall problems between the vertical and horizontal aspects of the project. Since WisDOT does not usually build buildings, the design team took the lead and provided top-notch facilities along with updated horizontal transportation. Finally, the team also integrated this project with an adjacent park and ride facility on a short schedule. Through engineering expertise, the park and ride was completed on-time and on contaminated soils by using a geogrid to support the structures above.

This project demonstrates a great lesson – a dedicated, innovative design team can make a huge difference on even small projects. Himalayan was able to make a big difference and provided the project on time and on budget.
An Olympic-sized swimming pool is paired with a splash pad and water slides to truly provide fun for the whole family.

It’s hard to top the public benefits of a major new park and aquatic center. The City of Appleton set out to renovate Erb Park which had been overlooked in past development. It sat on top of poor soils and needed to meet the city’s overall development plan which called for water entertainment in summer and sledding/ice-skating in winter. These requirements were compounded by asking that completion occur over one winter.

MSA met these challenges by coordinating public discussion with the client’s wish list. This coordination allowed the design team to quickly deal with challenges and to stay under the tight timeframe. The poor soils were carted off and the site was regraded to provide dual benefits: a sledding hill was created in one portion of the park and stormwater runoff was directed into a detention pond. The design team ensured that the new park did not increase stormwater runoff above the former level which was in line with the client’s goals. The design of the aquatic area was also innovative. The bath house was designed to be multi-seasonal – in summer it works like a traditional pool locker room but in winter it can be used for parties and other events.

The design team was able to meet the project deadlines which was a huge win – the public saw the successful completion of a major project and the facility was immediately enjoyed.

Minimizing excavation preserved most of the newly-paved street which saved money and preserved a better resident experience during construction.

Flash flooding leads to flooded basements. But when 400 basements flood on a regular basis, there’s a bigger problem. The Village of Whitefish Bay identified a 45-acre area experiencing consistent about flooding. They knew that only an engineering solution could overcome this persistent problem.

Clark Dietz conducted hydraulic analysis and found that the problems stemmed from a single sewer main pipe that serviced the area. The design team developed an alternative that involved a relief sewer system underneath a local street. To make this happen, extensive communication was needed with residents and Whitefish Bay. The engineers discussed all of the options with the public and clarified why this shorter, cheaper route under Fairmount Avenue was the best choice.

The solution was not without challenges – the street had recently been paved and was an important road for residents. Clark Dietz then developed a solution that involved trenchless technology which drastically reduced the amount of excavation needed and limited disruptions to traffic on the street. When groundwater backed up into the excavation areas, the design team even deployed pumps in a way that reduced noise in the neighborhood.

Clark Dietz and the Village of Whitefish Bay set out to improve residents’ lives. The team designed solutions that met the needs of the community in every way possible. The project highlights the good that proper communication and conscientiousness can bring.
Green County was faced with a traffic trouble spot – a wooden bridge opened in 1960 over a railroad bridge. It featured a counter-intuitive “hump” shape that decreased stability and safety. A smart design was needed to fix these issues and keep the road open for rural traffic.

Jewell Associates knew from the beginning that the old structure would have to be eliminated and completely rebuilt. The design of the old bridge arched over the railroad below and restricted speeds to less than 15mph. The first stage in replacing the bridge was to use Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) walls. MSE walls provide a better structure for the sides of the bridge and reduced the length of the bridge. This allowed the design team to use a single span structure which was less expensive than usual. Because the bridge sat over a railroad, there was a need for additional vertical clearance. While this usually leads to additional cost on other projects, the use of MSE walls and a single span kept costs low and reduce future maintenance costs. This structure is expected to last 75 years which is substantially longer than the original bridge, further reducing costs.

The design team worked closely with the county and railroad authorities to design a new bridge. With innovative design, they lowered the cost and met all the requirements – a great design goal to meet.
With clever design, the team repurposed land under the interchange to facilitate foot traffic between the lakefront and Historic Third Ward.

The I-794 ramps at Lincoln Memorial Drive in Milwaukee are a lynchpin in the transportation system near Lake Michigan. The ramps allow motorists access to the lakefront area as well as to the Historic Third Ward. Lincoln Memorial Drive is the main access point to the Summerfest grounds and other lakeside attractions. When this interchange needed reconstruction, it took complex design solutions to meet the needs of the area.

GRAEF determined that the interchange might be the simplest part of the project – by redesigning the ramps and connections, the space around it can be redeveloped into a park. What was more complicated was the traffic staging and stormwater impacts. The traffic signals along the street were designed to be responsive and fully adaptable to future technology; on-ramp detection ensures traffic does not back up onto the interstate. Combined, this will accommodate traffic event routes into the area for festivals. Another key feature was the attention paid to local concerns. The design features multimodal accommodation and allows pedestrians access to the lakefront, event grounds, museums and the Historic Third Ward.

The design team had to work in a complicated environment and anticipate future needs to minimize future construction. The project was completed on time, on budget and showed how the right design can integrate innovative solutions into every project.
Madison Water Utility is committed to sustainable practices and this commitment extends to its Operations Center as well. They looked for a design team that could provide measurable improvements to their green initiatives.

Mead & Hunt developed a holistic approach that would deliver the client’s goals in every facet. The entire facility is located on a converted brownfield, using land that was previously contaminated for a better purpose. This contamination brought special challenges that were handled by an underground stormwater treatment tank. Insulation was improved and combined with an HVAC system that was more efficient and minimized lost energy. Waste heat from machinery was repurposed and fed through the system as well (after being thoroughly ventilated). The water heaters fed into this system as well, sending their waste heat back into the system instead of venting it. On top of that, the building design maximized natural light and energy-efficient lights utilize automatic sensors, minimizing wastage. The design team crafted truck and maintenance bays to speed up work done every day through clever design choices. This also allows the facility to utilize natural light instead of working late hours.

Madison Water Utility can herald its facility as a model for urban renewal and it’s thanks to conscientious decisions by the design team.
The new structure preserves the historic bridge but with added fiber polymer to protect it for future use.

---

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Through 3D imaging, an accurate computer model can be created and manipulated while looking for design solutions in this old reservoir.

The Taylor Hill Reservoir is a historic and functioning water reservoir in Sheboygan. The 87-year-old tank is nearing the end of its current lifecycle and the client needed to know how to plan for its future. The best alternative could only be chosen through an extensive survey that revealed the reservoir’s condition.

raSmith combined the traditional with innovative methods to make sure the data provided was as complete as possible. There were seven steps involved and four were innovative practices for identifying distressed areas and providing alternatives. The primary component of these innovative methods was 3D LiDAR scanning. This provides a more comprehensive view of the structure than going through by hand or with simpler scanners. It identified weak spots in the existing structure and combined this information with other scans of the underbelly of the facility. When Sheboygan Water Utility decides between its alternatives, they concluded that repairing the structure was a viable option. This was only possible because of the work done by the design team.

Without damaging or interrupting the use of the reservoir, raSmith was able to evaluate the issues in an old structure. The decision to repair and maintain the facility for 25 years is a result of the excellent data provided.
The unique layout of this project demonstrates the J-turn aspect as well as the lanes that motorists can use when turning to minimize accidents.

Fundamentally, drivers expect two things from their trips: to get to where they’re going efficiently and safely. The intersection between WIS 54, a principal arterial route on the National Highway System, and County U was an extremely dangerous intersection. Angle crashes and fatalities occurred because of traffic volume and poor visibility. Becher-Hoppe designed an intersection that would keep traffic flowing and lower the number of crashes.

The design team decided to implement a unique J-turn intersection, named because the driver makes a J-shape when turning left or going straight. The design minimizes angle crashes because it doesn’t leave the side of a car facing oncoming traffic. Becher-Hoppe took this a step further and added auxiliary lanes for turning so that drivers wouldn’t have to rapidly cross lanes of traffic. Similar intersections have seen dramatic decreases in angle crashes and fatalities. The design also took into account multi-modal transportation needs as well as creating ample space for larger vehicles and trailers to make the turns. Finally, the team also modified the design to minimize local environmental concerns; no trees or wetlands were cleared during construction.

Engineers play a fundamental role in securing the needs of travelers. They deliver roads that get drivers there and they keep them safe – in this case, getting them there just as fast and keeping them a lot safer.

CONGRATULATIONS excellence award winners

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QBS FAQs

Hiring a professional engineer or architect for your project? Use Qualifications-Based Selection to get the best overall value for your project.

When anyone is faced with an engineering or architectural need, the most important decision for the project's success is the selection of a qualified professional engineering or architectural firm.

Why? Actual engineering costs make up a very small percentage of a project's total life cycle costs, yet this decision influences the level of success for every project element. These include site selection, design alternatives, budget, schedule, permits, aesthetics and operating costs, to name a few.

How does one select a design professional?

For information on the QBS selection process, frequently asked questions and the benefits of Qualifications-Based Selection visit www.qbswi.org. In addition, QBS Wisconsin will provide, at no charge, a facilitator to help owners learn about the QBS process.

Which organizations use QBS?

- American Bar Association
- American Council of Engineering Companies
- American Institute of Architects
- American Public Works Association
- Federal Highway Administration
- National Society of Professional Engineers
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Wisconsin Association of School Boards
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation
- Wisconsin Division of Facilities Development
- Wisconsin League of Municipalities
- Wisconsin Rural Water Association
- Wisconsin Towns Association

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