

A Brief Report to the Membership 2015-2016



As we ask you to renew your membership in ACEC, it's appropriate to report how the Council helped to advance the business interests of engineering companies at both the state and national level. These are just a few of the Council's more significant accomplishments over the past 12 months.

In Columbus . . .

Selected a new Executive Director to lead ACEC Ohio – Culminating a four-month search process, Beth Easterday was selected to succeed Don Mader, who retired after nearly 35 years with the Council. Beth has an outstanding background, having worked in the Ohio General Assembly and the Ohio Department of Transportation before becoming part of the management team at an ACEC Ohio member company.

Enacted legislation that bans local residency requirements – ACEC Ohio teamed with the Ohio Contractors Association and other industry groups to gain enactment of legislation that prohibits a public authority from forcing engineers and contractors to hire a certain percentage of persons who reside within the public authority's boundaries in order to obtain a contract with that public authority.

Led fight against PVC pipe legislation – For the second consecutive legislative session, ACEC Ohio spearheaded opposition to legislation, promoted by the PVC pipe industry, that would prohibit local governments from specifying the kind of pipe to be used in the construction of water and wastewater projects. ACEC Ohio believes that only a local government's professional engineering staff and its engineering consultants should choose the type of pipe that will be used on any particular project. Passage of HB 214 would cast a legal cloud over the engineers' prerogative to make these decisions.

Hosted a record-setting ODOT/ACEC Ohio Partnering Conference – Nearly 400 ACEC Ohio members and representatives of the Ohio Department of Transportation, from every district and Central Office, attended the fifth annual conference. The conference featured general sessions on ODOT's consultant evaluation system, LPA program, construction inspection program and other topics.

Defended the state QBS law – ACEC Ohio successfully challenged a number of procurements in which local governments required engineering firms to include competitive bids in their project proposals, in direct violation of the state's Qualifications Based Selection law. Most recently, protests lodged by ACEC Ohio prompted a large metropolitan planning organization and a county sanitary engineer to withdraw RFPs that included demands for price information and to reissue them to comply with the QBS law.

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Showcased projects demonstrating Engineering Excellence – ACEC Ohio hosted another successful Engineering Excellence Awards program, recognizing 14 outstanding projects, one of which brought home an award in the national EEA competition.

Met with leaders of Ohio General Assembly – ACEC Ohio officers and board members hosted dinner meetings with the Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives and the President of the Ohio Senate, along with members of their leadership teams, to discuss issues of importance to the industry, most notably the Council's opposition to extending the state sales tax to services.

Carried Ohio firms' concerns to Washington – Fifteen ACEC Ohio members attended the Council's annual convention in Washington, DC, in April and took advantage of the opportunity to meet with most of the members of the state's Congressional delegation. ACEC Ohio "citizen lobbyists" discussed with lawmakers onerous new overtime regulations, the need for sustainable, long-term transportation funding, the importance of enacting a comprehensive national energy policy and other issues.

In Washington . . .

Secured a long-range transportation funding bill – ACEC worked with other highway industry organizations to pass the FAST Act, which reauthorizes federal surface transportation programs through FY 2020. The \$305 billion bill provides for modest increases in state highway allocations and provides funding stability for state and local transportation agencies.

Gained big reforms in federal design/build – The Federal Acquisition Regulatory (FAR) Council issued a final rule limiting two-step design/build finalists to five teams. The rule, which was expedited by the introduction of ACEC-backed legislation, is in response to the concerns of member firms about the high cost of design/build competitions. Also, Congress is moving ahead with ACEC-backed legislation that will limit the use of single-phase design-build to projects under \$3 million.

Advanced major water resources legislation – ACEC is working to secure enactment of the Water Resources Development Act of 2016. The House and Senate are nearing agreement on the bill, which would authorize construction of 28 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) projects covering dams and locks, flood control, and environmental restoration. The Senate bill also authorizes assistance for communities to address drought, water quality problems, and lead in drinking water, and creates a water trust fund to support infrastructure upgrades.

Preserved cash accounting for engineering firms – ACEC lobbied to defeat Congressional proposals that would have forced many firms to make the costly conversion to accrual accounting.

These are just a handful of ACEC's accomplishments and activities over the past year, and the agenda for the year ahead is even more ambitious.

Thank you for supporting ACEC – the only organization working to advance the business interests of engineering companies like yours!