Register Now for Infrastructure Day - Tuesday, May 8

It’s Never Been More Important

Gathered from across the state, ASCE members will be visiting our elected officials in Harrisburg on **Tuesday May 8**. With transportation infrastructure funding legislation at a dead stop, our water and wastewater systems underfunded and countless other areas of our state’s infrastructure in decline, making our legislators aware of broad industry support for these issues has never been more important.

**Here’s what we need from you:**
- Your commitment to travel to Harrisburg on May 8, 2012 to participate
- An hour or two of your time beforehand to familiarize yourself with current issue briefs detailing industry positions on what needs to be done to support strong infrastructure in our state (to be forwarded to registrants)

**Here’s what you will get from participating in this event:**
- Satisfaction that you are involved in your community and improving Pennsylvania
- The opportunity to start or strengthen your relationship with elected officials
- Networking with other engineers from across Pennsylvania

Meetings with elected officials will be scheduled for you with a view toward maximum efficiency and effectiveness. We encourage you to ask your employer to support you in attending this important event.

ASCE will be joined by the Mid-Atlantic section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (MASITE), the Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers (PSPE), the American Council of Engineering Companies of Pennsylvania (ACEC/PA), and other allied organizations.

**REGISTER NOW AT:** [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/infrastructure_day_2012](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/infrastructure_day_2012)

**SCHEDULE:**

8-10 a.m. – Orientation/Registration w/ continental breakfast (Harrisburg Hilton)

9 a.m.-5 p.m. – Legislative Visits (Hill Offices)

11 a.m.-5 p.m. – Ready Room (Room 113, East Wing Capitol)

5-8 p.m. – Legislative Reception (Whitaker Center – Kunkel Gallery)
Tuesday, April 24, 2012 is Election Day. Every State Representative office is up for election. Half the State Senate offices are up for re-election. Every U.S. Congress office is up for election. 1/3 of the U.S. Senate offices are up for election.

In Pennsylvania, the public infrastructure all of us own collectively is literally falling apart. Our elected officials have not adjusted the revenue we collect to maintain our roads, bridges, locks and dams, airways, parks, and other infrastructure for inflation.

Municipalities and Counties are reeling from the effect of NO adjustments for inflation in the road tax for 15 years in Pennsylvania, 20 years for the nation.

The Western PA economy is on the verge of collapse with the locks and dams on the rivers. Despite pleas from the industry that pays the tax to support the maintenance and repairs on the locks on which they depend to increase the tax they pay, Congress has done NOTHING.

What is the number of the bill your elected official introduced, sponsored, or supported to fund (not finance) the infrastructure that supports the Pennsylvania economy? Did it fully fund, or was it just a token?

If you don’t know, ask him or her and take note. As we find out, we’ll let you know.

Most of those who read this newsletter are “Supervoters,” those who vote in nearly every election. You are probably one of them.

Know the answers and vote this month and in November. Countless Americans risked or gave their lives so you can vote. Block off the time on your calendar NOW. If you can’t be there, get an absentee ballot. If you don’t know how, find out.

Vote this April!
CALL FOR PAPERS
April 3-5, 2013
2013 ARCHITECTURAL ENGINEERING INSTITUTE (AEI) CONFERENCE
The Nittany Lion Inn, The Pennsylvania State University

Organized by:
Department of Architectural Engineering
The Pennsylvania State University, USA
and The Architectural Engineering Institute
American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)
www.engr.psu.edu/ae/AEI2013/index.asp

The Architectural Engineering Institute (AEI), in partnership with the Department of Architectural Engineering at the Pennsylvania State University, is pleased to announce the 2013 AEI Conference. The conference will include workshops, technical paper sessions, invited and keynote presentations, panel discussions, and local tours of technical interest.

CONFERENCE TOPICS
The conference covers all aspects of Architectural Engineering. Papers are invited from both practitioners and researchers on the following and related topics:

- Architectural Engineering Education
- Case Studies in AEC
- Building Illumination Systems
- International Trends in Buildings
- Building Envelope Systems
- Innovative Building Materials
- Structural Systems
- Building Security
- Innovations in Building Design
- Building Construction Engineering and Management
- Building Failures/Forensics
- Daylighting
- Building Acoustics
- Building Information Modeling (BIM)
- Energy Efficiency in Buildings
- Sustainable Buildings
- Architectural Systems
- Building Mechanical Systems
- Building Electrical and Lighting Systems
- Multi-Hazard Building Engineering
- Healthcare facility design and construction
- Innovative and Specialty Buildings
- Tall Buildings
- Facilities Management;
- IT Systems for Building Design and Construction
- Integrated Systems
- Building Control Systems
- High Performance Building Systems
- Building Simulation
- Building Retrofits
- Seismic Performance of Buildings
- Historic Preservation of Buildings

In addition to the above, proposals are invited for special sessions and workshops on focused topics that fall within the overall remit “Architectural Engineering.” Email session and workshop proposals to anumba@engr.psu.edu.

PAPER SUBMISSION SCHEDULE
Abstracts should be 200-300 words long and indicate which conference topic it is most closely related to.
Abstract Submission: June 15, 2012
Abstract Acceptance: June 30, 2012
Full Papers and Workshop Proposals: September 15, 2012
Final Papers: December 15, 2012
Early Registration Deadline: January 15, 2013

To encourage industry participation, practitioners are not obliged to submit written papers. They should still submit an abstract that describes their proposed presentation, and instead of written papers, submit a PDF version of their presentations for inclusion in the conference proceedings.

STUDENT COMPETITION
ASCE’s Charles Pankow Annual Architectural Engineering Student Competition will be held at the conference. See the Website for details.

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Dodging Towards Glory

By Jim Radion, YMF Vice-President

On a brisk Saturday morning in February, twenty teams gathered together in hopes of achieving glory. What transpired was a mix of sweat, guts, and determination in crowning the victor of the 6th Annual YMF Dodgeball Tournament. Dipping and ducking their way to the top, Chester 2 (sponsored by Chester Engineers) earned the coveted championship. The tournament highlights the YMF’s commitment to team building and networking within the civil engineering community.

The YMF partnered with U. Pitt’s ASCE Chapter and CMU’s ASCE Chapter to hold the event at Carnegie Mellon University’s gymnasium. Fun was had by all participants as the YMF continued its best of three opening bracket and had spirited matches pitting students and practicing engineers against each other. Big Balls Brigade (one of three teams from Pitt-Johnstown) dressed to impress and took home bragging rights as the “Best Dressed.” The event also capped off a successful YMF fundraising campaign, raffling a set of Penguins ticket graciously donated by HDR Engineering, Inc.

If you’d like to help or participate in next year’s event, please email: jradion@gfnet.com.
Pittsburgh—In Danger of Losing its Public Transit?

By Kate Luce Angell

“The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) supports the funding, planning, design, construction, operation, and long-term maintenance of safe, efficient, and cost-effective public transportation systems as key components of a comprehensive, multi-modal approach to meeting our nation’s transportation needs.” – ASCE Policy Statement

By now, most residents of Allegheny County are aware that the Port Authority is struggling with a financial crisis and is planning cuts which will eliminate service for 45,000 daily riders, raise fares again and lay off 600 workers. Those cuts will also:

- Eliminate the 28X, the bus service to the airport. Instead of $3.75 to go to the airport—where many county residents work—it will cost $25 for a shuttle and $35-40 for a taxi.
- Eliminate bus and ACCESS service for more than 1,000 older and disabled residents.

By the time the planned cuts are put into action this summer, and added to the cuts from 2010, Pittsburgh will have lost around half of its public transit capacity. When a transit system is reduced by half, the result is often a “death spiral”: transit becomes an untenable solution for people looking to get to work on time, and as fares rise, those who can use a car to get to work will opt to do so. With reduced ridership, transit must raise fares again—until there is no transit system left.

Even for those who don’t take the bus or T, these changes will have a huge impact:

- With reduced or no bus service to downtown, thousands more will need to drive and park there. Rush hour traffic and downtown parking rates will likely triple. Our already stressed roads and bridges will be hit even harder.
- Without an economical way to reach their jobs, thousands will simply lose them; the rest will shoulder much larger costs in parking, car repair, and car ownership. The ripple effect will mean higher costs, higher unemployment, failed businesses and reduced income for everyone in the region. And since the majority of tax money for the state is produced in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, tax revenue will fall for all of Pennsylvania.
- Pittsburgh’s hard-earned reputation as one of the country’s most livable and green cities will be erased overnight—there’s no “livable” and “green” without public transit. The city and the surrounding areas will no longer be able to attract new business and residents based on these assets. Our hospitals and schools will end up with lesser institutional reputations. This will cause wages and taxes to fall, and state revenue to fall again.

Gov. Corbett received the recommendations of his very own Transportation Funding Advisory Commission (TFAC) last August, which proposed that the cap on the gas tax be lifted and license and registration fees be increased, producing $2.7 billion. Both Republican and Democratic leaders have offered plans based on the TFAC’s recommendations, but so far, Gov. Corbett has declined to move forward on addressing the transportation funding crisis.

Part of the problem is that public perception of transit’s costs vs. payoffs tends to be inaccurate or fail to take into account the entire picture. Transit is an infrastructure investment, but it’s one that makes overwhelming economic sense—its return on investment is very high, higher than almost any other type of public investment. As to the concern about increased taxes, the amount of increased costs that Pennsylvanians would have to pay as a result of the gas increase and rise in license and registration fees recommended by TFAC is dwarfed by the huge negative impact on the state’s economy.
as a result of losing a functioning Pittsburgh transit system, by potentially millions of dollars.

Another common complaint is that transit is subsidized, and that it must be able to make money under free market conditions. It’s true that transit is subsidized—but so is all transportation. Twenty percent of federal transportation funds goes to transit, but a whopping 80% goes to roads. Highways receive an annual subsidy of somewhere between $400 billion and $1 trillion. Transit only gets $17 billion. There is no transportation “free market.”

Transit is also important in that it allows regions to thrive economically: its true dividends don’t show up in the Port Authority’s bottom line, but in the ledgers of thousands of other businesses and in the pockets of taxpayers.

Opponents to funding transit also point to the fact that a portion of the Port Authority’s deficit is a result of underfunded pensions and rising benefit costs for its workers. This is true all across the country, not just here. Investment didn’t keep pace as costs rose, and the market tumble also affected these funds. But Port Authority has received concessions from its unions that have reduced its outstanding debt by tens of millions of dollars, and it continues to do so. And even critics of the Port Authority have been impressed by the organization’s efforts to streamline its operations.

Transit does not benefit only one region or group of people, but rewards public investment across the board, through increased economic health and increased tax revenue. If our state leaders refuse to act to help Pittsburgh’s transit system, not just transit riders will be affected—everyone will pay a high price.

**National Focus: Share your story to convince Congress to make transportation infrastructure Job 1**

How long has it been since the last legislation authorizing federal surface transportation programs expired? About two and a half years, or more than 900 days! SAFETEA-LU, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users package expired in September 2009. Since then, Congress has done nothing but pass a series of extensions — as recently as last week — while a long-term solution remains unresolved. Share your stories about how the continued uncertainty has affected your job, profession, and community with ASCE. Take a quick survey at [http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22F8A73JWES](http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22F8A73JWES). ASCE’s Government Relations team wants to show your anecdotes to Congress to help them see the real-world consequences of kicking surface transportation projects down an ever-deteriorating road.

**Congratulations to William Whittaker, Ph.D.,** a member of the Pittsburgh Section and Professor of Robotics at Carnegie Mellon’s Robotics Institute, who has been selected to receive ASCE National’s Columbia Medal. The Columbia Medal recognizes sustained outstanding contribution to the advancement of aerospace engineering, sciences and technology in at least one of the following areas: teaching, research, design, development, planning, construction, management, or direct participation in space-borne missions and/or ground-support activities. The award will be presented at the Earth & Space Conference, Pasadena, CA, April 15-18, 2012.
The Newsletter is published monthly except June, July and August. **Deadlines for all material is the first Friday of the month prior to publication.** To change your address and to update your membership information, go to the website [www.asce.org](http://www.asce.org) and select “Update Your Membership” under the “Members Only” link, or call (800) 548-2723 and ask for the membership department. Also contact Kate Luce Angell so that the change(s) can be made to the local database.

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_Disclaimer:_ The American Society of Civil Engineers and the Pittsburgh Section are not responsible for any statement made or opinion expressed in this publication. Editorials represent the official policy of the Pittsburgh Section.

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