From the Executive Director of ACEC/NC:

INFRASTRUCTURE.

The term dominates the conversation in our industry and nationally. Details have finally been released on the President’s proposed $1.5 trillion program to rebuild the nation’s infrastructure, and while the shape of the program and the funding mechanisms will be debated in Congress, the good news is that a proposed plan is finally on the table. In North Carolina, NCDOT is working diligently to speed project delivery for transportation programs and the Connect NC Bond Program passed in 2016 has projects moving forward in buildings, water, wastewater, and other vertical infrastructure. These state programs have provided huge benefits to our members, but the work continues. There are initiatives at the state level to create long-term funding for K-12 schools and transportation programs.

Despite all the distractions in Washington and Raleigh, the fact is that infrastructure remains an area in which bi-partisan consensus can be reached. ACEC/NC is all in, working closely with our national organization in Washington and a broad coalition of business and labor groups in North Carolina. ACEC’s “citizen lobbyists” also have a key role to play in this—as the success of the recent tax reform legislation proved. Our upcoming Consulting Congress Days bus trip to DC in April and our Recovery Coalition Legislative Day in Raleigh in June will include major pushes to get these programs done! We look forward to seeing you at both events.

Finally, our new State PAC (ACEC NC PAC) and Independent Expenditure (ECNC) are up and running and preparing for the November mid-term elections to ensure pro-business candidates are elected to Congress and NCGA.

Together, we can accomplish great things for North Carolina!

James A. Smith, P.E.
Executive Director, ACEC/NC

What has ACEC done for me lately?
The Power of ACEC


ACEC/NC Executive Director Jim Smith with Senator Richard Burr and President George W. Bush October 2016
Dear Colleagues -

The President’s State of the Union address featured a pitch for a $1.5 trillion infrastructure program to rebuild the nation’s roads, bridges, water systems, energy and other critical assets, but failed to identify sources of funding - without which the plan would be a mirage. ACEC is now working with Congress to fund the plan and, in particular, remedy the declining Highway Trust Fund. The large amount we raised for ACEC/PAC in 2017 - a record-breaking $1,069,704 - will be put to good use in our aggressive 2018 advocacy program recently approved by the ACEC Executive Committee.

~Dave

PRESIDENT’S MONTHLY UPDATE

February 1, 2018

General

• The ACEC Executive Committee approved the Council’s 2018 legislative agenda, which focuses on infrastructure funding, energy legislation, regulatory reforms, and other key measures.

• The Executive Committee approved the establishment of a new Geotechnical/Geoprofessional Coalition to provide business resources and advocacy for firms engaged in these disciplines.

• The Executive Committee also approved an amendment to the ACEC Bylaws, subject to final approval by the Board of Directors, that would authorize the ACEC Chair to make any needed interim appointment to fill a Vice Chair position that becomes vacant prior to the end of a term.

Government Advocacy

• Advocated for the extension of key expired tax provisions, including the Section 179D energy-efficient commercial buildings tax deduction.

• Submitted comments to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and General Services Administration (GSA) seeking elimination of the term “professional engineering” in GSA’s Federal Supply Schedule in order to clarify that such services should be procured using QBS procedures.

• Met with GSA’s new Public Buildings Commissioner to brief him on: the importance of QBS, the need for increasing the number of engineering projects funded through the agency, and action on other issues related to the $5 billion Public Building Fund.

• Briefed senior U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff on the status and purpose of the ongoing New York University (NYU) study on the costs of performing work in-house by the Corps versus contracting out to the private sector.

• Asked the Department of Labor to reconsider its 2013 decision to apply Davis-Bacon wage rules to survey crews.

• The author of the ACEC-sponsored study Superfund 2017: Cleanup Accomplishments and the Challenges Ahead (Kate Probst) testified on the study before the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

• Collaborated with ACEC/Illinois on outreach to their state congressional delegation to help address FAR compliance concerns at Illinois DOT.

---Continued on p.4.
Reports & Updates

Joint ACEC/NC and PENC Environmental Committee’s Annual Symposium was a Success!

The Joint ACEC/NC and PENC Environmental Committee’s Annual Symposium was a huge success with high-profile speakers including leaders from NCDEQ, NCDOT Technical Services, the North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association, and Dominion Energy on Thursday February 15th at the McKimmon Center in Raleigh.

Michael Scott, Director of the Division of Waste Management for NCDEQ served as keynote speaker discussing initiatives including Emerging Compounds, Permit Transformation, Community Engagement, and Implementation of the Coal Ash Management Act.

Peter Ledford, General Counsel for NCSEA discussed the Renewable Energy Regulatory Reform bill (HB589) and how it is transforming the renewable energy market in North Carolina; and Bruce McKay, Senior Energy Policy Director for Dominion Energy presented how the pipeline can transform the economy of Eastern North Carolina.

Attendees also benefited from hearing how the NCDOT is improving their processes to adjust to their new decentralized system.

Thanks to all the speakers, attendees and volunteers who helped make this event a success!

Wendee Smith, PE – Co-Chair, Environmental Committee, North State Engineering
Sarah Spagnola, PE – Co-Chair, Environmental Committee, Duke Energy

2017-2018 Board of Directors

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On March 15, 2018, Several Board and Charlotte Area Council members enjoyed Lunch and networking at the Speedway Club in Concord, NC. After Lunch they enjoyed a “Feel The Thrill” Speeway Tour.
ACEC President’s Monthly Update continued from p. 2....

- ACEC/Indiana became the first state to meet its 2018 PAC goal; Georgia’s Jay Wolverton became the first fully paid ACEC/PAC Capitol Club member for 2018 (contributing the legal maximum of $5,000 in a calendar year).
- ACEC/PAC hosted a fundraising event for Rep. John Culberson (R-TX) in Houston.

Business Resources

- Nearly 400 sites registered for January online classes on critical industry topics, including tax reform, DFARS, and workplace harassment; a webinar on the impact of the new tax reform law in particular was a blockbuster with 160 registrants.
- With more than 60 registered sites, Sexual Harassment Prevention in the A/E Workplace: Understanding the Law; and Establishing and Improving Policies, Procedures and Effective Training, was another popular webinar which helped identify the elements of effective policies on sexual harassment.
- The Registered Continuing Education Program (RCEP) added three new providers in January: The Engineering Management Institute, Advantage Strategy Consultants, and Martech Media.
- Held Mysteries of the FAR Revealed: Using the AASHTO Audit Guide: Course One - Orlando 2018, where nearly 20 attendees explored effectively using the AASHTO Audit Guide in the development and administration of A/E consultant direct and indirect costs and rates.
- February online programs will feature: How Consulting Engineers Create Added Value; Your Marketing Toolbox 2020; Less Talk, More Action: 5+ Strategic Ways to Master Project Coordination; Strategy Execution Secrets - Avoid Risks and Succeed; Communicating Technical Information to Decision Makers; The Do’s and Don’ts of Contracting for Professional Services; How to Position Your Firm to Win Work Before the RF is issued; Communicate with Presence; Impact of Automated & Connected Vehicles on Transportation, Site/Land and Parking Design; register through our Online Classes webpage.

SENATOR RICHARD BURR SHARES LEGISLATIVE AGENDA WITH ACEC’S RAYMOND

ACEC President/CEO Dave Raymond and other business association leaders met with Senator Richard Burr (R-NC), chairman of Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, on Capitol Hill last week to discuss the Congressional agenda for the remainder of the year.

Of primary interest to the engineering industry is the Administration’s proposed $1.5 trillion infrastructure program, including $200 billion in direct federal funding to supplement existing programs and incentivize state, local and private investment.

The Senate is also focused on passing a final appropriations package for 2018, and moving forward with spending bills for 2019.

Contact ACEC/NC: 919-781-7934 or info@acecnc.org
2018 ACEC NC PAC, ACEC/PAC, ECNC

ACEC/PAC (NATIONAL PAC) –

The ACEC Annual Convention and Legislative Summit is just around the corner. As a reminder, the Convention begins with a welcome reception Sunday evening April 15th and then the opening General Session begins Monday morning with political strategist Steve Schmidt and national commentator Tucker Carlson. The ACEC Spring Raffle drawing will take place on Wednesday morning, April 18th at 7:30 AM. Don’t forget to purchase your Spring Sweepstakes Raffle Ticket(s). Numerous cash prizes will be awarded and you do not need to be present to win. Thanks to your efforts, ACEC/PAC is off to another excellent start to the year: $193,695 raised for the first two months of 2018, putting us in a good place to meet our annual targets. Just as impressive, 44 state MOs have already recorded ACEC/PAC receipts for the year, including North Carolina. I cannot stress the importance of entering an election year with a strong ACEC/PAC funds to help elect pro-business members to Congress.

ACEC/NC PAC (STATE PAC)

Our new State PAC (ACEC NC PAC) is off and running and gearing up for the May primaries in North Carolina. Contributions to the PAC can now be made by personal check, cash (subject to limits), by credit/debit card (in person), and on-line thru our direct link. Our first State PAC Sporting Clay Fundraiser is scheduled for May 3, 2018 at Drake Landing in Fuquay Varina. You won’t want to miss this exciting new event. Gather a team or just yourself and come on out and demonstrate your shooting prowess. Shotguns, golf carts, shells, ear protection, safety glasses, safety briefing, lunch and a guaranteed good time will all be provided.

ENGINEERING COMPANIES FOR NORTH CAROLINA (ECNC) –

ECNC, our new Independent Expenditure organization, recently enacted a program of assessing each member firm a voluntary contribution to ECNC and included a line item in our 3rd quarter dues invoice to our member firms to help fund ECNC. This voluntary contribution will provide us gather the initial capital to prepare for the major legislative or ballot initiatives that will help our profession and benefit each of our member firm’s businesses. ECNC was created to support programs and ballot initiatives that build and protect the engineering profession. For those firms who contributed this past quarter, a big THANK YOU for your support. There are several bond initiatives, including funding for K-12 schools and continued transportation infrastructure improvements, that could be coming and we as an industry need to be ready to support these programs that benefit engineering companies.
DOE SECRETARY PERRY RECEIVES ACEC RECOMMENDATIONS TO STREAMLINE PERMITTING

Improve Cybersecurity Regulations

Energy Secretary Rick Perry asked ACEC President and CEO Dave Raymond and other association CEOs for recommendations on improving the DOE regulatory process. ACEC sent three key recommendations to Perry: 1. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews should be limited to two years. 2. In Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) hydroelectric and natural gas infrastructure permitting processes, federal agencies with jurisdiction should undertake concurrent reviews and be held accountable for meeting deadlines. 3. Department of Energy groups working on supply chain cybersecurity technology, standards and guidance should include representatives of the engineering industry in order to avoid regulatory confusion and inefficiencies. Regulatory reforms in the energy marketplace will likely be included in a larger infrastructure initiative from the White House in early 2018.

2018 LEGISLATIVE OUTLOOK: INFRASTRUCTURE

BY SAMUEL GREENGARD - Reprinted with ENGINEERING INC. JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2018

WILL 2016 ELECTION PROMISES FOR SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BE KEPT?

Today’s political environment can be summed up in two, frustrating words: partisan gridlock. Aside from the year-end sprint to pass tax reform, it has become next-to-impossible to enact major legislation in several areas, including transportation, water infrastructure and energy. Expectations for 2018 nonetheless, remain high.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

A 2016 report by the National Association of Manufacturers, showed the gap between current spending and what is needed to revitalize U.S. infrastructure—including highways and bridges, transit systems, aviation, ports and inland waterways—totals more than $1 trillion. ACEC has for years advocated for strengthening the long-term fiscal stability of the Highway Trust Fund, as the annual gap between Trust Fund revenues and annual expenditures is projected to grow to $20 billion by 2021. The Council will continue working aggressively to advance a bold infrastructure investment program that includes robust funding for core federal programs, innovative financing mechanisms to promote additional private investment and measures to increase utilization of private sector engineering and design capabilities. In early 2017, President Trump released a proposal to provide $200 billion in federal funds to leverage additional state, local and private sector investment as part of a proposed $1 trillion infrastructure plan to rebuild America. It focused on expanding private sector funding and promoting the use of public-private partnerships (P3s). Congress, however, continues to wait on the White House for details of the president’s initiative. “There are fundamental questions about how we invest in ourselves,” says Rich McFarland, senior vice president at Parsons Corp. While some states and localities, including the state of West Virginia and the city of Los Angeles, have recently passed transportation initiatives, federal funding and oversight remain critical. “Obviously, maintaining national standards is critical for commerce and the economy. Interstate highways and many other projects don’t stop at state lines,” observes Cathy Connor, senior vice president and director of federal government affairs at WSP USA. In addition, many projects are too extensive and expensive for states or localities to tackle on their own. “You can’t leave everything up to state and local funding,” she says. Greater state autonomy combined with President Trump’s call for the greater use of challenge grants also has some concerned that a clear set of winners and losers might emerge. Some states have resisted increases in their gas tax, others divert gas tax revenues into a general fund and still others...
Members in the News

WK DICKSON ANNOUNCES THE OPENING OF NEW REGIONAL OFFICE IN TENNESSEE

W.K. Dickson & Co., Inc announced the opening of a new regional office in Knoxville, Tennessee. This new location will allow WK Dickson to better serve existing and future clients while maintaining the firm’s primary mission of providing client-centered solutions. The office is led by Ryan Blake, PE, Vice President, who joined the firm in February.

The Knoxville regional office team will primarily provide planning, design, and engineering consulting services for water, wastewater, and stormwater projects. Future expansion plans include the addition of airport, land development, energy, and GIS consulting services for the region.

“Growth in Tennessee has been very consistent, with many communities outpacing their water and wastewater capacity,” said Ryan Blake. “I have been very impressed with WK Dickson’s ability to mobilize resources in just about every facet of infrastructure. Their one-firm mentality is on full display. I’m excited about the growth opportunities with such a great firm.”

Ryan Blake, PE is a civil engineer whose focus is on water resources. A graduate of the University of Tennessee, Ryan specializes in management for water and wastewater rehabilitation projects as well as pipelines and pump stations. Joining Ryan are Rick Kirby and David Reece, PE. Rick is a senior consultant with decades of experience in the utility market and has helped improve critical infrastructure throughout Tennessee. David supports the rest of the team as a regional practice manager tasked with helping develop the firm’s client base in Knoxville and surrounding communities.

DEWBERRY ANNOUNCES THE PROMOTIONS OF SEVEN EMPLOYEES THROUGHOUT NORTH CAROLINA

Dewberry, a privately held professional services firm based in Fairfax, Virginia, has announced the promotion of more than 80 employees nationwide, including seven staff members within the firm’s Charlotte and Raleigh, North Carolina, offices.

In Dewberry’s Charlotte and Raleigh offices, promotions include:

- **SHEPARD HOCKADAY, PE**, has been promoted to senior vice president and works with the firm’s mechanical, electrical, and plumbing group as business unit manager in the Raleigh office.
- **PETER ANDERSEN, PE**, and **MATTHEW WEST, PE, LEED AP BD+C**, have been promoted to senior associate in the Raleigh office. Andersen is the electrical department manager in the office and chief electrical engineer for the firm.
- **CHRISTIAN MATTHEWS, PE, PMP, CEM, LEED AP**, Jeffrey Roney, PE, LEED AP, and Patrick Wade, PE, LEED AP, have been promoted to associate, all in the Raleigh office. Matthews is a client manager who specializes in laboratory design. Wade is a structural engineer and project manager with a focus on asset management.
- **TONY MILLER, PE, LEED AP**, has been promoted to associate in the Charlotte office. Miller is a structural project manager.

FREESEx AND NICHOLS EXPANDS NORTH CAROLINA TEAM WITH THREE WATER/WASTEWATER ENGINEERS

Freesex and Nichols, Inc. has enhanced its water/wastewater capabilities for partners throughout North Carolina with the additions of David Malinauskas, P.E., Brian White, P.E., and Marsha Leroux, E.I.T. Malinauskas and White are senior project managers in Raleigh, and Leroux is a project engineer in Greensboro.
Malinauskas has almost 20 years of experience in all phases of water and sewer utility design projects, including hydraulic model development, utility planning, route analysis and permitting. He has worked closely with public utilities and municipalities across North Carolina, including the City of Raleigh, City of Durham, Orange Water and Sewer Authority and Greenville Utilities Commission.

White joins Freese and Nichols as the lead engineer for hydraulic modeling and master planning efforts in North Carolina. At his previous firm, he oversaw all hydraulic modeling-related projects and supervised modeling project teams.

Additionally, White has a deep understanding of system modeling for water distribution networks and sewer collection systems, including fire flow modeling, transient and surge analysis, GIS and model integration, operational system modeling and general system troubleshooting.

Leroux is spearheading Freese and Nichols’ water/wastewater efforts in the Triad, a role that builds on her background in master planning and hydraulic modeling. Throughout her career, she has worked closely with clients to develop master plans, evaluate system conditions, and create models to identify existing problems and future capital improvement projects.

**WITHERSRAVENEL EXPANDS TEAM**

WithersRavenel is excited to announce that MARTIN-MCGILL, INC (DBA WR-MARTIN) is officially joining our team. By bringing in WR-Martin’s personnel and resources, WithersRavenel has supplemented and strengthened our portfolio of service offerings, adding resources in grant and loan application and administration assistance, planning and facilitation, economic development, management strategy and operations.

WithersRavenel has also added Asheville to its list of office locations, which include Cary, Greensboro, Pittsboro, Raleigh and Wilmington. They now serve clients in Western North Carolina as well as the Piedmont-Triad, the Triangle and the Coast, making WithersRavenel a true mountains-to-sea firm.

The inclusion of WR-Martin’s management consulting services in particular bolsters WithersRavenel position as a leader in the engineering consultancy field.

**ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

The energy/environment sector is another area where ACEC is advocating important changes. ACEC seeks smart, resilient and sustainable energy and water infrastructure including more efficient, yet effective, environmental permitting to enable timely investment, design and construction. Where lack of funds is an issue, such as with stormwater, water supply and treatment facilities, ACEC advocates for more appropriations, loans and loan guarantee programs. During his campaign, President Trump promoted energy independence, then hit the ground early in revising U.S. policy, starting with actions to greenlight major pipeline projects delayed by the previous administration. In March, President Trump then signed an executive order directing federal agencies to review their regulations to enable more efficient permitting decisions. Many agencies have since issued reports on their plans to expedite NEPA and other reviews. The administration has also repealed Obama climate rules, including the Clean Power Plan as well as the rules defining the Waters of the United States. Major energy legislation that passed with broad, bipartisan support in the last Congress is back this year—Energy and Natural Resources Act—which addresses a variety of issues, ranging from long-term energy supplies and modernizing power grids to conservation efforts and energy efficiency standards. More controversial environmental bills have passed the House, such as the Ozone Standards Implementation Act. The bill would delay implementation of the Obama administration’s 2015 rule lowering the acceptable level of ozone and would require the Environmental Protection Agency to reconsider the ozone rule every 10 years, rather than on the current timetable of every five years. Ozone standards can pose a major obstacle to energy infrastructure investments in some parts of the country, including pipelines, power generation, refineries and chemical facilities. One problem, says Farrar, is the lack of a predictable framework for energy. “There’s not as much certainty in the marketplace as companies would like. For a variety of reasons, Congress has not addressed the market factors affecting liquefied natural gas exports, as well as gasoline and oil imports and exports, for a couple of decades,” he explains. Alternative technologies such as solar, wind and wave action should be viewed as opportunities rather than just liabilities, he says. “The reality is they create different types of jobs that then create different types of opportunities.” The issue, for now, is that alternative energy sources are not a “For a variety of reasons, Congress has not addressed the market factors affecting liquefied natural gas exports, as well as gasoline and oil imports and exports, for a couple of decades.” 2018 reliable source of energy for base load energy production. Consequently, Farrar supports the expansion of nuclear-powered electricity generation, which he describes as clean and safe. The biggest issue is spent fuel storage. “Right now, it’s kept on-site, but that is not the ultimate solution,” he says. Ultimately, energy
STANTEC SELECTED TO DESIGN HAMPSTEAD BYPASS AND US 17 IMPROVEMENTS IN HAMPSTEAD IN NEW HANOVER AND PENDER COUNTIES, NORTH CAROLINA

Division Three of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) selected international consulting design firm Stantec to provide analysis and engineering services for Hampstead Bypass from I-140 to US 17 north of Hampstead. Corridor improvements to existing US 17 in Hampstead are also included in Stantec’s design services. These projects, totaling $250 million in construction, will greatly improve north-south mobility along the North Carolina coastline north of Wilmington, and will address safety and congestion issues along US 17 in Hampstead. An accelerated design schedule for these projects should result in construction beginning no later than Fall 2020.

Stantec has a long history providing consulting services in North Carolina, and offers offices throughout the state in Winston Salem, Raleigh, and Charlotte. The firm has professionals in North Carolina who provide a wide range of services, such as infrastructure design, planning, landscape architecture, environmental services, urban design, and project and program management. For further information, visit Stantec.com.

SENIOR DESIGNER JOINS MCKIM & CREED

McKim & Creed, Inc. announces that KENNETH CRAWFORD, EIT, has joined the firm’s headquarters as a senior designer specializing in water and wastewater projects.

For more than a decade, Mr. Crawford has provided high-quality CAD drawings, designs, calculations and estimated quantities for a variety of water and wastewater infrastructure projects. He has also furnished prepared drawings and calculations for transmission pipeline projects for the Tarrant Regional Water District in Texas.

“Kenneth brings to his clients impressive design skills for municipal water and wastewater infrastructure projects, and he’s going to be a valuable member of our team. In addition, he is going to provide the skill set that allows McKim and Creed to meet the evolving needs of our growing client base,” said Ken Orie, PE, senior project manager with McKim & Creed.

Mr. Crawford is a graduate of the University of Texas at Arlington with a degree in physics. He is proficient in AutoCAD 2017, Civil 3D 2017, Microstation v8i, Geopak and Geopak Water/Wastewater.

THE ACEC/NC BUSINESS RESOURCE EXPOSITION

FEATURING KEYNOTE SPEAKER, TIM GRIFFIN, AUTHOR OF THE BOOK WINNING WITH MILLENNIALS: HOW TO ATTRACT, RETAIN & EMPOWER TODAY’S GENERATION OF DESIGN PROFESSIONALS.

MONDAY, MAY 7TH
11:30 AM - 6:00 PM
MCCORMICK CONFERENCE CENTER
RALEIGH, NC

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER

Contact ACEC/NC: 919-781-7934 or info@acecnc.org

... Legislative Outlook continued from p.8

members in the News, Continued from Page 8...

policies must focus on a balanced approach. “We need to move toward alternative energy sources in a smart and careful way,” McFarland says. Other countries, as well as cities and private entities in the U.S., have demonstrated that alternative energy is viable—and it leads to economic gains.

TAXES

Tax reform is the one major agenda item expected to become law early in 2018. The final bill appears to be a major win for the engineering industry, particularly for ACEC’s effort to secure tax benefits for firms of all sizes and tax structures. The final tax plan will reduce corporate tax rates from the current 35 percent to 21 percent, which will help engineering firms organized as C corporations be more competitive in the global marketplace. The bill also preserves the ability of firms to use cash accounting versus undergoing the expensive process of switching to accrual accounting. And the final package maintains existing tax incentives for retirement and employee ownership, such as ESOPs, which were key industry priorities. For firms organized as “passthrough” businesses—S corporations, partnerships and LLCs—where the taxes are paid through the filings of individual firm owners, the bill will create a new 20 percent deduction instead of a reduced tax rate. While the original House and Senate versions of the bill initially excluded many engineering passthrough firms from the proposed tax benefit (along with doctors, lawyers and other service industries), ACEC was successful in securing changes that will treat the industry the same as other nonservice industries in qualifying for the new deduction. Like those industries, engineering passthrough owners with incomes below $315,000 for joint filers and $157,500 for individuals can claim the full deduction. Owners with higher incomes will be able to claim the deduction using rules similar to those that apply to the Section 199 deduction that many A/E firms claim. Other changes included in the final tax bill—including the elimination of the Section 199 “We’re not at the pinch point yet, but it’s clear there will be problems soon if we don’t see improvements to airport infrastructure.” THOMAS O’GRADY | HNTB CORP.

deduction, reductions in state and local tax deductibility, and changes in the application of the alternative minimum tax—will affect individual firm owners in different ways. Infrastructure funding and finance is an area where tax reform fell short of expectations. Federal action here is long overdue. The ongoing push for lower taxes, resistance at the national level to increasing the federal gas tax and the distaste for toll roads have made it extraordinarily difficult to fund transportation and infrastructure upgrades. Infrastructure improvements are further complicated by a growing need for cybersecurity protections—particularly as smart cities and autonomous vehicles roll into the landscape. There’s been no increase in the federal gas tax since 1993, and the introduction of hybrid and electric vehicles is making it harder to fund projects in the traditional way. While some states, such as Oregon, have studied and even tested mileage-based transportation taxing, and Congress included funding in the FAST Act in 2015 to support additional pilot projects, there’s still no consensus about how best to move forward, or when. “The question our country must answer is: How do we invest in our collective economic future to meet the needs of a population exceeding 300 million people?” McFarland says. WSP’s Connor points out that more than 24 states have raised their gas tax over the last few years, and voters have increasingly
ACEC/NC AND MEMBER FIRMS HOST INTERNATIONAL TRADE DELEGATION

On March 14, 2018, ACEC/NC and Member firms Wood, PLC, A Morton Thomas, and CDM Smith hosted a trade delegation made of Transportation Officials from several ex-Soviet Union countries. The group of 20 officials and 2 interpreters were here in North Carolina for several weeks to learn about new technologies and procedures related to delivering transportation design and construction services from American businesses. The trade delegation was part of the US Department of Commerce’s Special American Business Internship Training Program (SABIT) and included representatives from such countries as Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and others. We met with the delegation for nearly three hours at the offices of Wood PLC, near Durham, and focused specifically on how ACEC/NC represents the industry and how transportation projects are planned, designed, and constructed in North Carolina. Special thanks go to Bob Miller (Wood), Bill Rice (AMT), and Stephen Cook (CDM Smith) for helping lead the program. The interaction was in-depth and informative for all!

Click on the above images to download full-size versions...

passed initiatives funding projects. “Pushing responsibility to the state and local level can be a positive thing, but it cannot become a substitute for federal action,” Connor says.

BUILDING ON THE FUTURE

In the end, Connor and others are taking a tempered view of the current legislative and executive environment. They realize that while the acrimony and divisiveness in Washington aren’t likely to vanish anytime soon, there’s a growing consensus that political leaders will be forced to find some common ground. “We will eventually hit the point where some type of action is taken on the key issues, especially infrastructure,” Connor says. “These issues are too important to ignore. They are vital to our nation’s economic well-being.”

BY SAMUEL GREENGARD a technology writer based in West Linn, Oregon. Reprinted from ENGINEERING INC. JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2018

... Legislative Outlook continued from p.9

ACEC-NC RALEIGH
NORTH CAROLINA

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HOURS OF OPERATION:
Weekdays, Monday through Friday
8:00am - 5:00pm

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Independence Day
Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day
Day after Thanksgiving
Christmas Day

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