



Small Firm Council

The Small Firm Connector

From the Chair—Rob Overfield, P.E.



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I hope everyone is surviving the winter – both personally and professionally. I have had a few days when I could NOT get to the office (it snowed and I had to go skiing!!). Somebody had to do it!

We just had another successful SFC Winter meeting. This time it was in San Diego, so folks had the chance to get to a “warm” place. We started the first morning with a roundtable discussion. This provided a good networking opportunity as well as a chance for our presenter, Wayne Rivers from the Family Business Institute, to get to know his audience. He did a good job of working some of our roundtable topics into his program, “Improving Your Business Operations“. He provided insight and perspective on several issues, including 1) reasons why closely held businesses fail, 2) building blocks for creating a sustainable closely held company, and 3) modern management best practices for success in any economic climate. As usual, everyone should have been able to come away from the seminar with some good tips for improving their business.

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Thank you to our sponsor!



SCHOLARSHIP DONATIONS

We have collected \$3,000 for the SFC Scholarship thusfar.

A big thanks to all of our donors and a big reminder to anyone that hasn't donated, this is a worthwhile cause.



From the Chair—Continued

We are getting ready for the Spring Conference in Washington , DC at the end of March. The CEO Roundtable will be another exciting session with opportunities to meet colleagues from all over the country and share problems and solutions that we face every day in our business. We have also scheduled a Coalitions’ “Meet & Greet” one evening where we can continue to network with our peers. We will be coordinating a program for small firms on both Friday and Saturday with valuable information pertinent to our business.

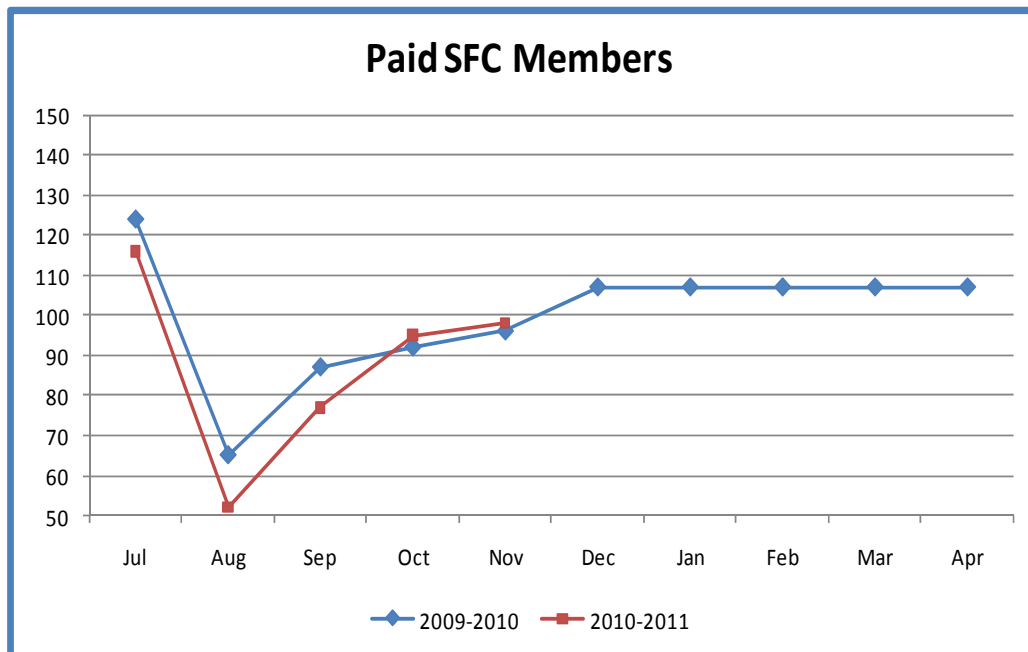
There are several ways that you can help continue the success of the Small Firm Coalition. Be watchful for potential firms and encourage them to join our coalition. Remember - **“If you act like a small firm, and think like a small firm, you probably are a small firm.”** You can also help spread the word by sending in your donation to the SFC Scholarship Fund which allows us to offer a scholarship nationally to a deserving young engineering student.

Hope to see you in Washington this spring. Until next time – Rob

SFC Membership Update

The Small Firm Council has had a great year so far! We have been able to retain a lot of members because the work of the SFC continues to be relevant and valuable.

If you have any questions or concerns about your membership , please contact SFC Executive Director Heather Talbert at htalbert@acec.org or 202-682-4377.





SFC WINTER MEETING ROUND-UP

Mark Hamouz, P.E., SFC, Steering Committee Member

After the Fall Conference, the ACEC Small Firm Council (SFC) has been actively working on influencing government agencies on small business issues, coordinating with the other coalitions to increase the voice of business to these agencies and other associations, and promoting and sponsoring educational and networking opportunities for SFC members. A newsletter was published a few months ago which detailed the SFC events held and sponsored during the Fall Conference in Puerto Rico. This newsletter along with other material describing the Small Firm Council's mission and benefits are on the Coalitions & Forums menu on the ACEC website at www.acec.org.

On January 28 and 29, 2011, the yearly winter meeting was held concurrently with the Council of Professional Surveyors (COPS) in San Diego with an attendance of 30 members. This meeting included the CEO Roundtable session, which is always an active event, and issues discussed were the BS+30, retention of employees in the current and future economic climates, the future of health care impacts on employees and firms, and the upcoming SBA proposed regulations on firm size due out for comment soon.



After the Roundtable session, in the afternoon and the next morning, the seminar was held entitled "Improving Your Business Operations" presented by Wayne Rivers, President and Co-founder of the Family Business Institute. This seminar provided an interactive opportunity to currently evaluate our businesses and to develop strategies and outlooks for our businesses to succeed in the future.

In-between the roundtable and seminar, many opportunities were available to network with other attending business owners. A pleasant advantage to holding the winter meeting in San Diego was the warm and pleasant weather. The SFC looks forward to holding the winter meeting in another *warm* location next year in February 2012 and we encourage anyone interested to contact me or another SFC member for details and information.

The Small Firm Council is looking forward to the upcoming ACEC Annual Meeting in Washington D.C., in late March, 2011. The CEO Roundtable will again be held on Friday and the SFC will be sponsoring a couple of seminars, an ice cream social with the exhibitors, and the opportunity to network with fellow SFC members and other ACEC member firms. We hope to see you there!

ACEC 2011 ANNUAL CONVENTION AND LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT



Join SFC and ACEC for the 2011 Spring Conference in Washington, DC. This year will prove to be a spectacular event. Join us in DC at the height of the Cherry Blossom Festival and you will have opportunities to meet and speak with your state's elected officials, as well as take advantage of ACEC's top-notch educational program.

Highlights for Small Firms include:

- ⇒ Large/Small Firm Teaming Forum—meet your potential large firm partners
- ⇒ Get tips on how to manage your size and your risk at Al Rabasca's "Small Firms, Large Losses, and Practicing Without Professional Liability Insurance" education session
- ⇒ Attend education sessions covering design build, public-private partnerships, contract negotiation and industry marketing
- ⇒ CEO Roundtables
- ⇒ Coalition Meet and Greet—an opportunity to interact (and belly up!) with State MO Directors, Coalition Leadership, and your peers



For more information and to register, go to www.acec.org/conferences/annual11/

NEW ACEC BUSINESS INSURANCE TRUST BENEFIT

ACEC members participating in the ACEC Business Insurance Trust (ACECBIT) Program and which have incurred losses and paid deductibles related to **Property** and **Automobile** insurance (comprehensive and collision) are now eligible to request from the ACECBIT financial assistance to help with the cost of the deductible. Under a new "**Member Deductible Assistance Program**" payments of up to \$1,000 per year will be made on a voluntary basis subject to available funds. Assistance will be limited to \$500 per claim with a total of \$1,000 per firm per year.

This is an ACEC-BIT "MEMBER ONLY" benefit, not found in any other insurance program....just another benefit of ACEC membership and participation in the ACEC-BIT!!! For more information, on this benefit contact the BIT Treasurer, Woody Germany, at 406-728-4611.

For more information on any of the Business Insurance Trust coverages, contact Jeff Connelly, at 1-800-338-1391.

ACEC EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

February 16

An Inside View of Programs and Funding of Rural Development, USDA

Learn how RD money is distributed, and opportunities available for engineering services.

Rural Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, distributes over \$1.5 billion annually in loans and grants. **Ben Shuman**, Senior Environmental Engineer, USDA, will describe how RD money is distributed and where engineers and local communities fit into the picture. Participants will get an update on the status of a sizable Farm Bill currently in the works and details on potential benefits at the local level.

February 17

The Perfect Storm—A Bad Lawsuit, A Bad Contract, Indemnification and The Duty to Defend

A look at recent case law, contractual clauses that can help manage A/E risk.

In this timely and important risk management online seminar, **Christine Drage**, Esq., Weil & Drage, APC, will focus on and detail key issues related to public and private A/E professional services contracts. Agenda topics include the contractual duties to defend and indemnify, and the practical reality of what happens in a lawsuit when a firm has a bad lawsuit, a bad contract, indemnification obligations and the duty to defend.

For more information or to register for any of these seminars, visit the ACEC Education page at <http://www.acec.org/education/index.cfm> or contact La'Creshea Makonnen at (202) 682-4338 or lmakonnen@acec.org.



ACEC
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES



INSTITUTE FOR BUSINESS MANAGEMENT



SMALL FIRM COUNCIL (SFC)



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Since 1990, the Small Firm Council (SFC) has represented and advanced small business interests of ACEC's small firms. SFC provides a forum for ACEC to focus solely on the needs of small firms.

SFC goals :

- Identify and influence important federal, state and local initiatives that directly impact small firms.
- Work with health, professional liability, and business insurance industries to improve access and affordability for members.
- Develop business education products and seminars focused on the specific needs of small firms.
- Provide a forum to develop solutions to the unique needs of small firm owners.

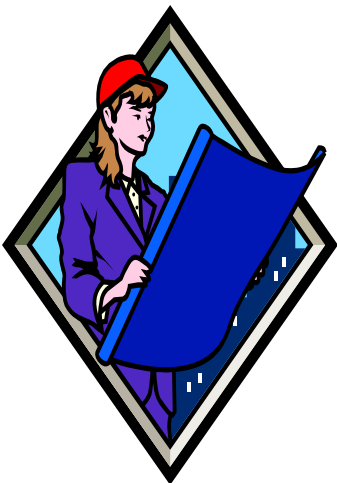
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Calendar of Events

March 30-April 2: **2011 ACEC Annual Convention**
Washington, DC

October 19-22: **2011 ACEC Fall Conference**
Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas, NV

Small Firm Council Steering Committee



The following Small Firm Council Steering Committee members are here to serve your needs. Please feel free to contact any of the members at their email addresses shown below.

Chair:

Rob Overfield, Engineering Associates, robertov@eaengineers.com

Steering Committee Members:

Karen Friese, K. Friese & Associates, Inc., kfriese@kfriese.com

Mark Hamouz, LONCO, Inc., mhamouz@lonco.com

Helen M. Himes, HH Engineering, Ltd., hhimes@hhengltd.com

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