



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES

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Bender Joins ACEC as Engineers Double Down on Advocacy

Washington, DC – Doubling down on its recent wins in tax reform, the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) – the business association of the nation’s engineering industry – recently announced the hire of veteran lobbyist and association leader Dave Bender to its DC advocacy team. Bender, who most recently served as Executive Director of ACEC/IL (the federation’s Illinois branch), has been brought on as the organization works to leverage its substantial and growing PAC and experienced policy shop in support of its 5,600-member engineering firms.

According to **ACEC President & CEO, Linda Bauer Darr**, engineers face threats of commoditization of their profession, challenges to licensure standards and qualifications-based selection (versus price selection), but also significant opportunities to press for greater infrastructure investment and private market growth.

ACEC pulled out a major victory recently in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. By securing access to the new 20 percent tax deduction for engineering passthrough firms, which represent the majority of ACEC’s membership, the law saved engineering firms millions of dollars and raised the profile of the 100+ year old organization.

“Dave is a known quantity in our industry. He’s part of the ACEC family with a track record of success in Illinois,” said **ACEC Chair, Manish Kothari**. “Dave served the state of Illinois in cabinet agencies and in the Governor’s office for years and has 20 years of association management experience, so he understands our firms, the industry and government. He will use those strengths to hit the ground running. Our members are fortunate to have him on the team.”

As Vice President of Political Affairs, Bender will be the newest addition to the ACEC advocacy team led by Steve Hall, ACEC’s Senior Vice President of Advocacy and External Affairs. Most recently, Hall hired former hill staffer Jeff Urbanchuk as Director of Strategic Communications. Urbanchuk handled communications for Rep. Bill Shuster (R-PA), former chair of the powerful House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

“Dave has been a tremendous advocate for our industry in Illinois. He brought great energy and enthusiasm to the job which has helped to elevate our organization’s stature in Illinois and

nationally. He has helped to protect the business interests of our member firms while being a tireless advocate for a sustainable infrastructure revenue program in Illinois,” said **John Nelson, Chairman of ACEC/Illinois’ Board of Directors**. “Although we will miss Dave back home, we see this as a great opportunity for Dave and for ACEC/IL as we add another great friend in Washington DC advocating on behalf of our industry.”

“Since I joined the engineering industry over seven years ago, the critical importance of the work done by engineering firms has fascinated me. The people are some of the most innovative thinkers I have ever encountered,” said **Bender**. “I am humbled and grateful to have the opportunity to continue my career combining my love of this industry with my decades of experience in the political arena. I have immense appreciation for ACEC President & CEO Linda Bauer Darr’s vision for ACEC’s future and am thankful to her for including me in it. I look forward to working with Steve Hall and with the entire ACEC team - a world class group of professionals.”

Bender will attend ACEC’s fly-in on May 7th as President of the Illinois delegation and officially join the team on June 17th.

Dave Bender Bio (headshot available) Bender was appointed President of ACEC/IL in 2012, where he oversaw an organization representing 235 consulting engineering firms with over 13,000 employees across Illinois. Bender has 20 years in association management and previously served as an assistant to former Illinois Governor Jim Edgar, Lt. Governor Bob Kustra, and was later Chief of Staff to Lt. Governor Corinne Wood. Governor Edgar appointed Bender as the Assistant Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture from 1995-1999. In addition to these official roles, Dave also served as the Deputy Campaign Manager for Governor Jim Edgar’s 1994 re-election campaign which Edgar won by a record 30-point margin.

In December 2018, Governor-Elect JB Pritzker appointed Bender as a member of the Pritzker/Stratton “*Restoring Illinois Infrastructure*” Transition Committee. Bender currently serves as Co-Chair of the Transportation for Illinois Coalition (TFIC). He is also the co-founder of the Illinois Business Immigration Coalition where he volunteers as a co-chair.

He was awarded the ACEC/Illinois Chairmen’s award in 2014 for his work building a professional design coalition to prevent the advancement of prevailing wage and project labor agreements in the engineering industry. Dave also was honored as the 2012 recipient of the Corporate Citizen Award by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights for his work on the undocumented Immigrant Drivers Certificate Law, which passed by one vote.

The American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) is the business association of the nation’s engineering industry. ACEC member firms drive the design of America’s infrastructure and built environment. Founded in 1906, ACEC is a national federation of 52 state and regional organizations representing more than 5,600 engineering firms and 600,000+ engineers, surveyors, architects, and other specialists nationwide.

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