

# Education & Partner Sessions

**More education sessions will be added as they are confirmed - please check back for updates to the schedule!**

## **Monday, June 12**

**10:15 am - 11:15 am**

### **Recruitment and Retention of the AEC Unicorns: How to Find Mid-Career A/E/C Professionals with the Experience and Passion to Lead**

*Justin Smith, AEC Lead LLC*

Discover how the most successful AEC firms enhance their recruitment and retention strategies. Explore ways to create the high-growth environments and programs that not only attract top-flight talent, but also develop it from within your organization. Specific steps on adapting to changing demands and applying training and development opportunities in communication, project management, and conflict resolution are also reviewed.

### ***Making the Employee-Owned Model Thrive in a Sea of Private Equity***

*Nick Belitz, Morrissey Goodale*

The engineering industry is awash in private equity firms, some with long-standing investments and partners in the industry, while others are new firms drawn by the lure of government spending on infrastructure. With both new and old money snapping up engineering firms, what is the traditional employee-owned to do? Attendees will learn the differences in the benefits of ownership in private equity-backed firms vs. traditional employee-owned engineering firms, how private equity changes the competitive landscape in the engineering industry, why firm leaders may gravitate to the private equity option, and how employee-owned firms can distinguish themselves when recruiting and retaining key staff.

### **How AI + Big Data Will Transform the AEC Industry**

Javier A. Baldor, BST Global

Artificial intelligence, machine learning and big data are changing the face of every industry. In this session, will examine how these technologies can be applied in the AEC industry to foster the data-driven consultancy of the future. Specifically, Javier will discuss a digital-first strategy that centers on three core tenets:

1. Embrace breakthrough innovations like ChatGPT through education and action
2. Become data-driven by defining your firm's holistic big-data strategy
3. Invest in AI and machine learning to gain predictive, project-based insights

By adopting these emerging technologies and processes that embrace data intelligence, team intelligence, and project intelligence, the data-driven consultancy of the future is not only within reach, it can truly be realized.

### **Five Trends Shaping the A&E Industry**

Megan Miller and Bret Tushaus, Deltek

As firms look for ways to differentiate and grow, knowing what's happening and what's trending in the industry is critical. In this session, we'll take a look at some of the top trends from the Deltek Clarity report and how they are shaping the engineering and architecture industry. We'll dig into key themes around technology and innovation; investing in people; project challenges and more. Attendees will also gain insight into what firms can do now and how technology can be a catalyst for success.

### **Federal Markets: Department of Energy Loan Program**

Ariane Benrey, Department of Energy, Loan Program Office; Todd Schrader, Department of Energy, Office of Clean Energy Development,

With implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) the Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED) and Loan Programs Office (LPO) are at the forefront of demonstrating and deploying the technologies critical to the Nation's clean energy future. This session will introduce the opportunities from each office that these laws have supercharged, including two major new programs and hundreds of billions in new loan authority at LPO and more than \$25 billion of investment for commercializing technologies at OCED.

11:30 am - 12:30 pm

### **Leadership Readiness: Is the Next Generation Ready?**

*Ahmed Kurtom, DesignForce*

Focus on the top five steps firms can take to be successful in the next five years, including hiring, cultivating talent, training and development, rewards and recognition, and growth opportunities. Attendees will leave this session with strategies to tackle this industrywide challenge, as well as tangible, implementable action items to ensure the next generation of leaders is prepared.

### **Investing in Technology to Differentiate, Diversify and Grow – Executive Panel Discussion**

*Moderator: June Jewell, AEC Business Solutions; Speakers: Kevin Switala, Gannett Fleming; Jon Carlson, Braun Intertec; Michael Davis, WGI; Andy Knauf, Mead & Hunt*

Learn how innovative engineering firm leaders have invested in technology to differentiate their services, gain a competitive advantage, and develop new revenue streams. We will showcase how four ACEC member firms have developed or acquired technology products, discuss the challenges of integrating new business models into their firms, and reveal best practices that your engineering firm can follow to reduce risk and develop successful technology practices.

### **Federal Markets: U.S. DOT Roadway Safety Strategy: What a “Safe Systems” Approach Means for Planning and Design, and Available Resources for State and Local Governments**

*Hari Kalla, Associate Administrator for Infrastructure, Federal Highway Administration*

The United States Department of Transportation National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS) outlines the Department’s comprehensive approach to significantly reducing serious injuries and deaths on our Nation’s highways, roads, and streets. This is the first step in working toward an ambitious long-term goal of reaching zero roadway fatalities. This session will review the major components of the NRSS, recent implementation activities, and anticipated actions from the U.S. DOT under a five-pronged approach that includes Safer People, Safer Vehicles, Safer Speeds, Safer Roads, and Better Post-Crash Care. Participants will learn about the implications for roadway planning and design and the billions of dollars in funding opportunities for state and local governments under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

## **Renewable Energy & Advanced Energy Project Investment Tax Credits**

Barry Devine, Tri-Merit Specialty Professionals

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 brought the most transformative renewable energy incentives to help US businesses manage and substantially reduce their energy costs and improve their energy security.

The A/E/C industry will have a formative role in the next steps toward enhancing our renewable energy infrastructure. Join us for an overview of what credits are available, the value of those credits and what the A/E/C industry needs to know about this new legislation.

## **Is Your 401(k) Fiduciary Liability Keeping You Up at Night & ACEC Business Insurance Trust Program & Benefits Overview**

Deb Stevens, ACEC Retirement Trust; Mary Erchul, ACEC Business Insurance Trust

Every company needs a 401(k) Plan for retirement planning and attracting/retaining the best talent. Did you know as a Plan Sponsor, you could be subject to liability and risks per ERISA requirements? Learn how you can examine risks, compare your plan features and fees, and sleep soundly at night.

Learn about ACEC Business Insurance Trust's program and benefits which includes information on the member firm benefits, types of coverages offered, and why your firm should join the program.

**3:00 pm- 4:00 pm**

## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Requests for Proposals (RFPs): Why Clients Are Asking About Your Firm's DEI Practices**

*Moderator: Masai Lawson, Gannett Fleming; C.Phil Campos, State Department, Bureau of Overseas Building Operation, The Office of the Procurement Executive, Office of Acquisitions Management, Facilities, Design and Construction Division; Martha Cross, City of Philadelphia, Department of Planning and Development; Jose Febrillet, Port Authority of NY & NJ*

A growing number of clients are scoring engineering firms on their diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) practices as part of requests for proposals (RFPs). More and more, a firm's DEI policies, work with disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) firms, workforce demographics, and work towards DEI in the A/E industry are figuring into the decision-making of potential clients. The session will feature a panel discussion

with clients and Procurement Officers on why they include DEI in their RFPs and how they assess the DEI practices of engineering firms. The discussion will also focus on the importance of submitting a successful proposal utilizing a DEI&B Plan and showcase ways to increase scoring for a successful proposal with a strong DEI&B Plan.

### **Utilizing Incentive Compensation Plans to Aid in Ownership Transition**

*David Cohen, Matheson Advisors; Barbara Irwin, HR Advisors*

While labor shortages and a looming potential recession are forcing engineering firms to focus on the now, it is just as crucial to focus on ownership transition and management succession. Long-term incentive compensation plans are popular in the industry and will continue to grow as a tool for succession planning. But what does that mean for a business owner just starting to think about succession planning? On the opposite end, what does this mean for rising leadership? This session will explore the use of incentive compensation to help facilitate ownership transition.

### **Federal Markets: Addressing the PFAS Challenge with Professional Consulting Services**

*Moderator: Luis Casado; Speakers: Art Umble, Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.; Emily Rempel, National Association of Clean Water Agencies; Jeff Gunnulfson, American Fuel and Petroleum Manufacturers*

This special ACEC session focusses on the implications of the EPA's PFAS regulation, the greatest technical, economic, and socio-political challenge to the water engineering profession in the last 50 years. Consultants must understand the forces and uncertainties behind the EPA actions, and the impacts on client water utilities, and affected upstream and downstream client entities e.g., manufacturing, recycling, and waste disposal facilities and more. Consultant and client representatives will provide insights to fundamental questions including: "what are the effects of hazardous substance designation and probable timelines for compliance" and "how should consultants address potential conflicts of interest dilemmas likely to arise?"

### **State of the Consulting Engineering Industry**

Jon Escobar and Rafael Barbosa, Morrissey Goodale

Jon and Rafael reference proprietary and up-to-the minute market research and intelligence to share how the AE industry is performing and what lies ahead. Topics

will include; key performance metrics, long-term trends and the market outlook, plus commentary on industry consolidation and recapitalization, the larger economic picture, and technology/digital deployment.

## **Embracing Disruption: Navigating Rapid Technological Changes in the AEC Industry**

Anthony Zuefeldt, Applied Software

The AEC industry is experiencing major disruption from emergent technologies. From AI, to computational processes, and construction digitalization, the rapid pace of change is challenging the industry to adapt and innovate. This session explores cutting-edge trends, their impacts, and strategies to adapt, ensuring firms stay ahead and avoid obsolescence.

## **Tuesday, June 13**

**11:00 am - 12:00 pm**

### **Women@Wade Trim: How an Employee Resource Group Helped Us Connect and Grow Our Culture in a Hybrid Environment**

*Rebecca Smith, Wade Trim*

This presentation will demonstrate how the Women@Wade Trim Employee Resource Group helps employees be successful by promoting a culture that encourages and values diversity, building a supportive community network across all offices, encouraging leadership development, and fostering an environment that helps to attract and sustain a diverse staff. Learn how an ERG has evolved and flourished in a virtual environment. Finally, discuss how ERGs help build and maintain culture in a hybrid work model.

### **Time to Act: Implementing ESG in Response to Global Challenges**

*Ryan Prime, VHB*

It is abundantly clear that the environmental threats we face today will continue to grow in scale and scope, impacting current and future generations. With these challenges increasingly in the headlines and at the forefront of our collective conscience, the time for AEC firms to heighten focus on Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG) is now. Discuss the need for AEC leaders to

collaborate, define their ESG approach, and hold themselves and their teams accountable for delivering on their ESG commitments. AEC firms are uniquely positioned to establish practices and procedures that integrate ESG into our operations and the services we provide to our clients. Learn how to think strategically by advancing sustainability in projects, defining ESG commitments, and using those commitments to inform the way firms are led and operated.

## **Federal Markets: CMMC Compliance - What Should your Firm be Doing**

*Moderator: Andy Knauf, Mead and Hunt; Kyle Urda, Summer Consultants; Laura McGovern, Benesch*

Preparing your firm to comply with federal cybersecurity regulations can be a lengthy and uncertain process, but it's crucial to start without delay. By learning from the experiences of other companies going thru the process and hearing from companies impacted by cyber-attacks you can navigate this road and take the necessary steps to ensure your business is ready for these changes. Don't risk missing out on contracting opportunities with government agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers, NAVFAC, GSA, and OBO. Act now to protect your firm and stay ahead of the curve.

## **The Ascent of the Tech-Forward AEC Firm and How to Become One in 2023**

Joe Sturdivant, Unanet

Findings from Unanet's annual benchmarking survey of nearly 400 AEC leaders, offers a revealing look at AEC industry trends and a yardstick for firms to measure themselves against their peers. It pays to be a tech-forward firm and in this session, we will break down what the latest research is telling us about the performance of tech-forward firms and what it takes to become one in 2023.

## **The Power of Digital Transformation in AEC**

Eric DesRoche, Autodesk

The AEC industry is facing an ever-evolving set of challenges, from labor shortages to fluctuating demand, to an explosion of data, tools, and technology. In this session, learn about how these trends are driving the next wave of transformation in AEC, the impact on productivity, and best practices when planning for more collaborative workflows. We will highlight real world examples from the infrastructure and buildings space where firms have achieved their business goals by digitalizing their workflows.

**1:30 pm - 2:30 pm**

### **Demystifying Private Equity In AEC**

*Michael Castellarin, Clairvest Group Inc*

Private equity can be used as a tool to provide firms with ample capital to pursue growth initiatives and assist with ownership transitions. Private equity's impact on the economy has been massive — in 2021, the private equity industry struck deals valued at \$1.2 trillion. In the A|E|C space alone in 2021, there were 26 private equity transactions representing firms on the ENR 500. Discover the history, understand the opportunities, explore the benefits, learn what an ideal partnership looks like, and gain the answers to your questions in this interactive discussion.

### **Implementing a Framework for Digital Delivery Nationally**

*John Wilkerson & Cathy Cassar; Michael Baker International*

Many DOTs are moving forward with Digital Delivery and have let pilots deliver the digital bridge model as the contract document. In place of the typical 2D plan set, a 3D model enhanced with annotations, model attributions, saved views, 2D details, and links to supplemental documents will be accessible from a computer or tablet. This presentation will cover the development of these industry leading pilots, including reimagining how design information is created and presented, engagements, and training.

### **M&A Due Diligence for Engineering Firms**

*Roger C. Guilian, Greyling*

Understanding the insurance products and services that are available to avoid gaps in coverage or being underinsured after purchasing or merging with another firm is critical. This presentation will address these issues in detail and empower attendees to approach their next M&A transaction more confidently.

**More education sessions will be added as they are confirmed - please check back for updates to the schedule!**