December 2019
ASCE Austin Branch Newsletter

In this Issue:

President’s Message
December Branch Meeting
ASCE Sponsorship Opportunities Now Available
Engineer of the Year Nominations
2020 ASCE Membership Renewal
SEI Update
YMF News
Government Affairs Update
EWRI Update
Projects with Underserved Communities at UT
Central Texas Discover Engineering Update
Calendar of Events
ASCE Job Board
ASCE Austin Leadership Opportunities
ASCE Austin Branch Officers
Continuing Education Workshop
Sponsors and Social Media

President’s Message  by Travis Isaacson, P.E.

Greetings all and Happy December!

With the holidays upon us and 2019 coming to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Austin Branch members, volunteers, officers, and committee chairs for making ASCE such a special organization to be a part of. Thank you for making this past year a success! I am so grateful for the opportunity to be engaged with this great organization, and I will continue to work with all of you to advance our engineering profession in 2020. As you think about upcoming New Year’s resolutions, please consider a professional one – becoming more involved with ASCE! It is easy, fun, rewarding and appreciated.

At this month’s Branch meeting, we feature our annual Ethics presentation conducted by the Texas Board of Professional Engineers. Come on out and get your 1-hour of ethics continuing education required for your P.E. license renewal. We are continuing to collect contributions towards the Capital Area Food Bank so be on the lookout for donation boxes at each table. The Branch will be matching dollar-for-dollar. Thank you to everyone who contributed last month!

We continue our search for the individual who we will honor as the 2020 Civil Engineer of the Year. Nominations are open for only a short time longer, and this award will be presented during February’s Texas Society of Professional Engineers’ banquet. Look for nomination forms on our website.

If you have not renewed your ASCE membership for 2020, take the time to complete the membership process. Encourage your peers to join ASCE as a way to stay plugged into the profession. If you’re not feeling the benefits behind membership, let us know – we’re here to help you get plugged in! The new year will bring a lot of new opportunities and activities at the Austin Branch including planning for our annual continuing education conference, loads of events during Engineers Week in February and many more. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me at (512) 203-8767 or tisaacson@rios-group.com.

Please follow up on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram for event recaps, upcoming events, relevant news, and updates.

Have a joyful holiday season and a happy new year!

Travis S. Isaacson, P.E.
EWRI Lady Bird Lake Cleanup by Kayak!
by Sunit Deo, P.E.

Please join EWRI volunteers to help Clean Lady Bird Lake via kayak!!

We will be participating in the Keep Austin Beautiful-Clean Lady Bird Lake Day for a Waterway cleanup on Saturday, December 14th from 9 - 11am.

Kayaks and clean up supplies with be provided. Please bring a full bottle of water, weather appropriate clothing and sun protection.

Meeting location is at 74 Trinity St.

Interested volunteers should register at the link below! Don’t wait to sign-up as the waterway spots tend to fill up.

Thank you for your support!


December Branch Meeting by Sam Shorter, P.E.

ASCE Austin Branch is excited to host Virginia Essary, Investigator IV for the TBPELS Compliance and Enforcement Department, as this month’s luncheon speaker.

Date: 12/17/2019 11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Location: Phillips Event Center, 8140 Exchange Drive, Austin, TX, 78754
Topic: TBPELS Engineering Ethics Presentation

Register here

Virginia Essary is currently an Investigator IV in the Compliance & Enforcement Department with the Texas Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors (Board). She joined the Board in March 2012 as a Document Support Technician in the IT Department. Shortly after she applied and accepted a promotion in the Compliance and Enforcement Department as an Investigator I. Prior to joining the Board, Virginia worked with the Texas Department of Public Safety from September 2011 until March 2012. She is a native of Austin, Texas, and holds a B.S. in Political Science with a minor in Economics from Texas State University. She resides in the Austin area with her family and in her free time enjoys walks with her two puppies.

Projects with Underserved Communities at UT
by Deianna Madlambayan

My name is Deianna Madlambayan and I am a third-year civil engineering student at UT. I am writing to request help with an engineering project of mine. This year, I am participating in a year-long service-learning engineering program called Projects with Underserved Communities (PUC). PUC is a group of engineers and social workers at UT addressing community needs around the world. Since 2010, PUC has completed 19 projects in 9 different countries by communicating directly and collaborating with international nonprofit organizations, local contractors, and community leaders.

ASCE Austin Branch Sponsorship Opportunities Now Available! by Augustine Verrengia, P.E.

ASCE Austin is proud to present some great new sponsorship opportunities for you and your firms to take part in for the upcoming year. Currently, the branch is seeking annual sponsors ($300), monthly meeting sponsors ($350), and sponsors for our annual continuing education event ($300) at a special bundle rate of $850, which will save you $100 when you pledge to support all three! Benefits of sponsorship include free postings on our job board and special recognition in our newsletters and at our events, which will bring added value to your overall commitment to the organization.

Sponsorship of the ASCE Austin Branch enables nearly all aspects of the organization’s function and for that, we appreciate your generous support! For more information about the benefits of sponsorship visit https://www.austinasce.org/sponsors. If you have any questions or for more information please email sponsorship@austinasce.org.

Thank you,
Augustine Verrengia, P.E.
Sponsorship Chair, ASCE Austin Branch
My team, comprised of six engineering students and one social work student, has partnered with a community in Lorena Village, Costa Rica and a local non-profit organization called Siempre Amigos to redesign and restore a soccer field that serves as a community center for the village. Presently, the general scope of our project includes rehabilitating the field itself and implementing a drainage system for the field, as the region experiences over 70 inches of rain a year, and minor facility improvements, such as benches for the players. We will also take part in the implementation process in the summer, traveling to Lorena in May to work with local contractors.

I wanted to know if any ASCE Austin Chapter members would be willing to help advise our team on the design of our drainage system. Please let me know if you’re interested:

deianna.madlambayan@utexas.edu.

Thank you for your consideration!

Central Texas Discover Engineering (CTDE) Update
by Linda Barlow, P.E.

Linda Barlow provides ASCE representation on the CTDE Steering Committee to coordinate our ASCE engineering outreach activities/events with other activities/events in Central Texas. Central Texas Discover Engineering’s mission is to excite Central Texas K-12 students to pursue careers in math, science and engineering through in-class, hands-on engineering activities and collaborative, volunteer-driven initiatives of the engineering and education communities. CTDE partnered with several organizations to

ASCE Austin Branch 2020 Engineer of the Year Award
by Garabed A. Harutunian, P.E., ASCE-Fellow, Honors Committee Chair

During Fall of 1999, the Austin ASCE Branch Board of Directors established the Branch Civil Engineer of the Year Award. This award is to be presented to Branch Members who have distinguished themselves in the fields of Education, services to the Civil Engineering profession, Awards received, services to the Austin ASCE Branch, services to the community, services to the student ASCE Chapter, and etc. The award is presented during the TSPE’s e-week luncheon banquet in February 2020.

During the Branch’s October and November 2019 luncheon meetings the nomination forms for this award was distributed. However, those members who couldn’t make it to those Branch meetings can acquire the form at the Branch website or by calling Garabed A. Harutunian at (512) 658-6299 or via e-mail (gharutunian@austin.rr.com). This year the nomination submittal package is due by January 6, 2020.

Past Award Recipients Include:

2019 - Anthony D. Buonodono
2018 – Roman Grijalva
2017 – Reem Zoun
2016 – Julia Harrod
2015 – Thomas R. Benz
2014 – Linda Barlow
2013 – Henry Leighton
2012 – Howard Lazarus
2011 – Amy S. Smith
2010 – C. Rick Conway
2009 – Dr. William H. Espey
2008 – Shelby G. Eckols
2007 – Dr. Robert Gilbert
2006 – Richard W. Furlong
2005 – Dr. Joseph Malina
2004 – Dr. Earnest F. Gloyna
2003 – Dr. Robert O. Lamb
2002 – Kelly D. Payne
2001 – Todd E Swoboda
2000 – Garabed A. Harutunian

2020 ASCE Membership Renewal
by Curtis Nunley, CAE

We don’t want you to miss out on the many benefits and services that you’ve received all year long, that is why we are providing you with three easy ways to renew: by mail, by phone, or online.

Continue to be part of the 150,000+ members who benefit from access to:

- AccessEngineering, a vast reference hub featuring online calculators, tutorial videos, handbooks, guides, and other content.
- 10 FREE PDHs per year for successfully completing on-demand webinars.
- Career resources:
  - Salary benchmarking tools
  - Career by Design
  - iLead
create Texas STEM Connections, a web-based tool that makes it easy for STEM professionals to connect with K-20 educators, classrooms, out of school time programs, and other volunteer opportunities.

CTDE sends out a newsletter that summarizes various volunteer opportunities, which I will be including in ASCE’s monthly newsletters. Based on their November newsletter for the school year, the volunteer opportunities include:

Science Thursday at the Bullock Texas State History Museum

**December 19, January 16, February 20, March 12, April 16, May 21**

*Pick one or pick several to join in on the fun (ASCE will be taking the lead for volunteer recruitment for the March 12 event, so mark your calendars!)* Get trained on fun, hands-on activities and lead them as students and schools visit the museum. Shifts from 9:30 a.m. to noon or 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

ChickTech Austin Seeks Women Mentors for High School Students

February - October 2020

Interested in supporting a high school student in her STEM journey? ChickTech Austin is seeking volunteer mentors for our 2020 Mentorship Program! The 8-month Mentorship Program pairs professional women in the greater Austin area with girls in our High School Program. As a mentor, you’ll help your mentee explore careers in technology and set educational goals. The program runs from February 2020 to October 2020, during which you’ll meet with your mentee on a regular basis. Together, you’ll explore exciting STEM activities sponsored by ChickTech or hosted

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**2020 ASCE Membership Renewal Continued**

Everyone that renews by December 13, 2019 will be eligible for our grand prize drawing for a $1,000 Amazon.com Gift Card.*

**Renew Your ASCE Membership Today »**

This year we're giving you the ability to enable auto renew on your ASCE account when you go through the renewal process.

If you'd prefer to renew by phone, ASCE's Customer Service is available at (800) 548-2723 (ASCE) or +1 (703) 295-6300 (International) between 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., E.T., Monday – Friday to assist you through the process. Or you can simply mail your completed renewal package back to us at Membership Department, P.O. Box 79084, Baltimore, MD 21279.

Thank you in advance for renewing your 2020 membership, we look forward to another great year.

*Read the contest information and rules. *Restrictions apply, see amazon.com/gc-legal.

**SEI Update by Eric L. Sammarco, PhD, P.E.**

Greetings from the SEI Austin Chapter! We hope everyone had a safe and relaxing Thanksgiving holiday last week. Thanks to all those who joined us for last month’s tour of the Waller Creek Tunnel project. For those that were not able to join, the 5,600-ft long tunnel lies 70-ft below ground and features a variable diameter between 22-ft and 27-ft. By catching floodwaters between Waterloo Park and Lady Bird Lake, the tunnel effectively reduces flood risk for downtown Austin—critical infrastructure for our local community. We had sold-out attendance and thoroughly enjoyed both the tour and the networking event afterwards.
CTDE Continued

by the Austin-area tech community.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities contact Linda Barlow at lbarlow@hvj.com.

SEI Update Continued

Our next Professional Meeting will be on January 30th, 2020. Coming soon...please keep an eye out for an SEI e-blast with additional meeting details. Also, we have already begun planning for Structural Engineering Talks (SET) 2020, our annual showcase event that typically takes place in the spring. Stay tuned for additional details early next year!

As always, you can stay plugged into the SEI Austin Chapter via our website, where you’ll find the latest and greatest on upcoming events and chapter leadership. We always welcome your thoughts on future technical and other special events. If there’s something you’d like to do, then we’d like to hear about it. Please drop us a line at sei@austinasce.org.

Younger Member Forum News by Katherine Smith, EIT

Keep an eye out for more upcoming events this fall. We look forward to meeting you! If you are interested in learning more about ASCE YMF Austin, please contact our president Marita Moya at marita.moya@halff.com

Upcoming Events:
Trail of Lights Social – Wednesday, December 18th 6:15 PM – 9:00 PM

Join us for a social gathering at Austin's Trail of Lights. We will meet first at Shady Grove on Barton Springs, beginning at 6:15pm, for some drinks and free appetizers. We will leave for the Trail of Lights at 7:30pm. For those that can't make it until later, we will meet near the Trail of Lights entrance at 7:45pm. Holiday sweaters are encouraged!

There is no entrance fee for the Trail of Lights!

Eventbrite: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/asce-ymf-trail-of-lights-tickets-82884091549?fbclid=IwAR0oZbM89DzKXx5dR7I7aVDrKSRIxVa5UPcmVbBB_c29CdcMCGbnyuwXmj2I

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

EWRI Lady Bird Lake Cleanup

Date: 12/14/2019
Location: 74 Trinity Street

December Branch Meeting

Date: 12/17/2019
Location: Phillips Event Center

ASCE YMF – Trail of Lights

Date: 12/18/2019
Location: Shady Grove on Barton Springs Road

ASCE Engineer of the Year Applications Due

Date: 1/6/2020
Location: Online
ASCE Job Board

Attention ASCE Austin Branch sponsors! Did you know the ASCE Austin branch has a JOB BOARD? If you’re looking to add new talent to your team, consider advertising on our website. Public entities (cities, counties, TxDOT, etc.) are also invited to post job openings. If you’re interested, please contact Lily Aung.

ASCE Austin Leadership Opportunities

If you’re looking for ways to get more involved with your local ASCE branch, you’re in luck! We’re actively recruiting for multiple open positions for ASCE Austin, EWRI, SEI, and more.

ASCE Austin Branch
Continuing Ed Committee
Contact: president@austinasce.org

Community Outreach Committee
Contact: Francisco Arce
communityoutreach@austinasce.org

Scholarship Committee
Contact: Genest Landry
scholarships@austinasce.org

EWRI
Multiple Open Positions
Contact: ewri@austinasce.org

SEI
Multiple Open Positions
Contact: sei@austinasce.org

Younger Member Forum News Continued

Past Events:
Shoal Creek Cleanup

YMF officers and members, along with UT ASCE student members, spent the morning of November 16th cleaning up the portion of Shoal Creek that YMF adopted last spring. There was such a large turnout that we were able to split into two groups and finish cleaning the creek in less than an hour! After we finished we got a quick bite at The Tavern. Thanks everyone who helped out! We’ll host another clean up in the spring.

Home Buying Seminar

We learned about the Austin real estate market, getting a loan, and much, much more. Thanks to our speakers for all of the helpful information and everyone for attending!
Younger Member Forum News Continued

Follow us on social media to interact with other young engineers, be kept up to date on current civil engineering issues and be notified of future YMF events. Find us on Facebook.

Government Affairs Update by Austin Messerli, P.E.

On November 5, 2019, Texans took to the polls to vote on 10 State Constitutional Amendments. ASCE specifically supported Propositions 2 & 8 and the organization is delighted to see that the public spoke loudly in support of infrastructure improvements for the State. The results of those propositions voted on are summarized below:

Proposition 1: REJECTED (65%)

This proposition would have allowed elected municipal judges to serve in more than one city at the same time. This means that only appointed municipal judges (which make up more than 95% of the state’s municipal court judges) can serve in multiple jurisdictions at the same time.

Proposition 2: APPROVED (66%)

Allows for the Texas Water Development Board to issue up to $200 million in bonds to increase their funding for water and sewer project in economically distressed areas, where the median household income is at or below 75% of the statewide median income level.

Proposition 3: APPROVED (85%)

Allows for the legislature to create temporary property tax exemptions on properties that are damaged in disasters declared by the Governor. The legislature now has the ability to pass laws which determine the eligibility, duration and amount of any write-offs.

Proposition 4: APPROVED (74%)

Prohibits the state from imposing or collecting an individual income tax unless a super majority is achieved in the House and Senate and a majority is achieved from Texas voters.

Proposition 5: APPROVED (88%)

Texas voters want dedicated funding for our State Parks with passage of Proposition 5. The amendment ensures the state’s sales tax revenues from sporting good are appropriated to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas Historical Commission to provide a dedicated funding stream for parks and historic sites.

Proposition 6: APPROVED (64%)

Texas voters agree to allow the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas to take out an additional $3 billion in debt, doubling its initial bonding authority since its creation in 2007 with passage of Proposition 6.

Proposition 7: APPROVED (74%)

Texas voters supported the amendment to allow the General Land Office and State Board of Education to each transfer $600 million from the Permanent School Fund’s lands and properties proceeds to the Available School Fund each year. These funds allow the General Land Office, the State Board of Education and other entities to double the amount of revenue they can give to the Available School Fund each year. The Available School Fund provides classroom materials and funding for Texas schools.
Government Affairs Update Continued

**Proposition 8: APPROVED (78%)**
Texas Proposition 8 creates a constitutional amendment to create a flood infrastructure fund, which would provide financing for flood drainage, mitigation, and control projects. It was unanimously approved in the state legislature, and comes with an accompanying bill, SB 7. It will govern the rules for how such a fund would be dispersed.

**Proposition 9: APPROVED (52%)**
Texas Proposition 9 allows the legislature to exempt precious metals held in precious metal depositories from property taxation. It also enacts an accompanying House bill that would govern the definition of such metals. The facilities that store them often charge a fee for the storage of these precious metals.

**Proposition 10: APPROVED (94%)**
Texas Proposition 10 deals with the retirement of service animals, such as dogs or horses. Previously, when they are removed from service, such animals are classified as salvage or surplus property, which means they can be auctioned, donated, or destroyed. Now the designation of these animals will change and allow the animal to be transferred to its handler or another individual, if such a transfer is in the animal’s best interest. More than 90 percent of Texas voters were in favor of this proposition.