April 2020
ASCE Austin Branch Newsletter

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

As the COVID-19 pandemic is changing the world we live in, ASCE Austin Branch continues to prioritize the health and safety of our members and community. We are committed to supporting the “Stay Home – Work Safe” orders put in place by our local governments. With that said, our Board has decided to suspend all upcoming Branch activities and events with an “in-person” component, including the April Luncheon, which was scheduled for Tuesday, April 21st. We are looking at ways to bring our membership more online content in the months to come.

Many of our planned events have already been rescheduled for later in the year. This includes the YMF Golf Tournament, which has been rescheduled for September 11th at Avery Ranch Golf Club, and our annual Continuing Education workshop, which has been rescheduled for October 9th at the J.J. Pickle Research Center. I hope you will be able to join us for these great events.

Civil Engineers have been deemed “essential workers” that are working on critical infrastructure projects. I applaud all of you for your hard work and determination to keep projects in our community moving through this difficult time. Whether you are working from home, reporting to the office, or working in the field at a construction site, I am proud to say that Civil Engineers are doing their part to help our society through this crisis.

We are also looking for more ways to help others in need during this crisis. ASCE Austin Branch will be sponsoring a Virtual Food Drive through the Central Texas Food Bank which will give our members a place to make financial donations. Please look for more information to come in over email and social media during the coming weeks.

As we look to the future, I want to encourage you to continue and grow in your involvement with ASCE Austin Branch. The nominations committee will soon be working to put a slate of officers together for the 2020-2021 board to present to the current board for approval. The 2020-2021 board will be voted on in June and installed at the September luncheon. If you are interested in the board or any one of our committees, please contact our and our Nominations Committee Chair, Kacey Paul.

Follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram for event recaps, upcoming events, relevant news, and updates. If you have any questions about our Branch, please don’t hesitate to contact me at 512-203-8767, tisaacson@rios-group.com.

Thank you for everything you do to support ASCE!

Travis S. Isaacson, P.E.
ASCE Membership Survey
by Colton Fisher, P.E.

Hello everyone! The ASCE Austin Branch is looking to receive your feedback to see what we are doing well and ways we can improve. Click the link below to fill out a quick 4 question survey at your convenience. Hope everyone is staying safe out there!

Survey Link

Central Texas Food Bank
by Francisco Arce, P.E.

In response to the global outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19), ASCE is committed to reducing the risk of adverse health impacts to the thousands of ASCE members, guests and staff that participate in numerous ASCE group volunteer events. The Central Texas Food Bank (CTFB) ASCE Group Volunteer event for May 9th has been canceled. The CTFB is classified as an essential service and is still looking for volunteers. The CTFB have adjusted their volunteer shifts to include fewer people to maximize social distancing and have taken more sanitary precautions to minimize risks. CTFB has even implemented a touch-free volunteer check-in system. For those still wanting to volunteer, unaffiliated to ASCE Austin Branch, please visit the website for more information.

ASCE Austin Branch 2020 Continuing Education Workshop by Jason Garza, P.E. and Jane Ellen Carter, E.I.T

In an effort to be proactive in keeping our community safe and healthy, the ASCE Austin Branch has made the decision to postpone our March 25th Continuing Education Conference until October 9th. We were so looking forward to the event, but we do believe this is the best course of action at this time. We will be working with our speakers and will do our best to keep the agenda intact.

PAID ATTENDEES AND SPONSORS:
If you have already paid for or sponsored the event, you have the option to obtain a refund or you can retain your registration, which will secure your seat and/or sponsorship for the rescheduled date this fall. You may contact us at continuingeducation@austinasce.org.

Thank you for helping us keep our community safe and healthy!

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

SCIENCE THURSDAY AT BOB BULLOCK MUSEUM RECAP
by Linda Barlow, P.E.

Austin Branch ASCE volunteered for the March 12th Science Thursday. As many of you know, on Science Thursdays, students can drop in and explore the Bullock Museum, see demonstrations, and participate in hands-on activities with STEM experts from Central Texas Discover Engineering (CTDE), which has ASCE representation.

With the Coronavirus just starting to come to the forefront, the museum took extra precautions with cleaning commonly touched surfaces, and added hand sanitizer stations throughout the museum. Additionally, all activities except the Van de Graaff which was on the first floor, were held in one room on the second floor. There were about 270 students pre-
Government Affairs
by Austin Messerli, P.E.

As we all are experiencing tough times, it’s imperative to realize the importance the Civil Engineering profession plays in the critical infrastructure and how it is essential to keeping society safe and will contribute to moving society forward past these tough times. Previously we saw a boost to infrastructure spending following the 2008 Financial Crisis for approximately $130 million for shovel ready transportation projects, flood protection, water/wastewater improvements, and many others. This boost indicated how vital our profession plays in the everyday lives of people. This continues to be the case even in the times we are currently in with the passing of the "Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act” (CARES Act), this continues to be the case. The $2 trillion stimulus package includes funding relief for transit, passenger rail, aviation infrastructure, and updates to the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF).

- $25 billion for transit grants
- $1 billion for Amtrak
- $10 billion for the Airport Improvement Program
- $56 million for the Essential Air Services
- A provision to spend the current HTMF balance but, also ensures all future HMTF revenues of about $24.5 billion over the next decade

While it is only a start, it shows how vital and essential our industry contributes to getting our cities, states, and Country back to normal.

If you or you know someone who would be interested in being part of the Government Affairs Committee don’t hesitate to reach out by email.

SCIENCE THURSDAY Cont’d

registered for a Bullock Museum field trip for the Science Thursday opportunity.

In addition to two CTDE volunteers and approximately four UT student volunteers, ASCE provided four volunteers, Linda Barlow and Gabriel Arroyo from HVJ Associates, James Mercier, retired, and Kelsea Barlow from Secretary of State’s office. We floated bowling balls, built and raced boats, threw lassos and Hondas and learned about sound waves. It was the last Science Thursday before the Museum closed due to COVID-19.

Travis County Floodplain Reforestation Program Planting Event by Francisco Arce, P.E.

On Saturday, March 7th, on behalf of the ASCE Austin chapter, Francisco Arce, PE at BGE, Inc., Jacob Gay, PE at Dashiel Corp., Lizzie Wilson, EIT at BGE, Inc., Idene Hadjizamani, EIT at Pape-Dawson Engineers, Inc., and friends of Lizzie Wilson attended the Travis County Floodplain Program Planting event hosted by Treefolks. The event took place along a tributary of Harris Branch within the Bellingham Meadows subdivision in northeast Austin.

The Travis County Floodplain Reforestation Program is in partnership with City Forest Credits, City of Austin Watershed Protection Department, and Travis County. This program helps to restore degraded creeks in eastern Travis County, providing many eco-benefits, such as water & air quality, flood mitigation and critical wildlife habitat; while generating Carbon+ Credits through public and private land. This pilot project is funded through the Nature Conservancy, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, City of Austin’s Office of Sustainability and through private donors.

The ASCE-affiliated group, along with dozens of other volunteers, helped plant 1,500 saplings ranging from Pecan, Desert Willow, Texas Redbud, and Mexican Plum. The team showed up ready to work, donning boots and work jeans, ready for fun morning of light manual labor. The weather could not have been better for outdoor work, overcast, low 60s, with an occasional light drizzle. Treefolks provided the team with all the tools, materials, as well as coffee, water, and snacks.
Coronavirus Webinar Series for Students
by Lily Aung, P.E.

Coronavirus & Environmental Engineering Science
April 14 - 2:00 pm (Eastern)

Transmission of Viruses in Droplets and Aerosols in the Built Environment
April 17 - 2:00 pm (Eastern)

Essential Buildings: US Army Corps of Engineers Assistance with Increasing Hospital Capacity
April 23 - 2:00 pm (Eastern)

Construction Institute - Student Days 2020
Denver, Colorado | July 31 - August 4, 2020
Application Deadline -- April 15

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
ASCE April Luncheon
Cancelled

SET Talks
Postponed Until Fall

ASCE YMF Golf Tournament
Postponed Until Fall

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 our 2020-2021 Board, as well as multiple open positions for ASCE Austin, EWRI, SEI, and more.

SEI Update by Scott L. Wallace, P.E., F.SEI, SEI Austin Chapter President

In this season of uncertainty, it’s becoming increasingly clear that this time will be defined by a fundamental pivot from the period before COVID-19 to the new normal that will emerge as the pandemic subsides. Just as airline travel and large gatherings were changed with the addition of TSA screenings and increased security measures due to the September 11 attacks, businesses or entire industries may be forever changed due to this pandemic.

Whoever develops the best vision of the new post-pandemic norm and adapts to meet any consequential challenges will be in a very favorable position. These trying times have prompted firms across the globe to reconsider what is really important as folks are productively experiencing doing things in ways previously thought to be impractical or non-productive. Businesses will have to adapt as client and individual priorities and habits change.

Because of this, SEI has made some changes for the near future. Until further notice, we will not be holding our traditional bi-monthly Professional Meetings that normally occur at Ferguson Structural Engineering Laboratory. SET 2020 previously planned for April also will be postponed. We hope to bring it back in the Fall. Please watch the website for updates (https://www.austinasce.org/sei/).

As SEI tries to adapt to these new conditions and continues with our mission to advance and serve the Structural Engineering profession, we have offered the following virtual event.

The Structures 2020 Virtual Event features content from the recently canceled Structures Congress on Generations@Work, Confidential Reporting on Structural Safety CROSS-US, and Performance-Based Design. It took place on April 7th but a recorded version will be available. Information can be found at SEI News.
Leadership Opps Cont’d

If you are interested in the board or any one of our committees, please contact our and our Nominations Committee Chair, Kacey Paul, at kpaul.pe@gmail.com.

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

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

EWRI
Multiple Open Positions
Contact: ewri@austinasce.org

SEI
Multiple Open Positions
Contact: sei@austinasce.org

2019-2020 ASCE Austin Branch Officers

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DeSimone Consulting Engineers
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Engineers Without Borders-USA Greater Austin (EWB-USA GA) by Lizzie Wilson, EIT

Engineers Without Borders Greater Austin Tanzania Project
Shelter in place has not stopped progress on EWB-GA’s International Project in Tanzania. Although we had to postpone our travel to the community, we are continuing what we can to prepare for our first assessment trip. Our anticipated travel dates were June 2020, but the EWB-USA has suspended all international travel due to the pandemic. As a team, we continue to meet virtually via video chat to discuss what we need to prepare for our assessment trip. Last week, Robert Read educated the team on in-community testing techniques, which we are using to generate a packing list and determine what materials we need to purchase before we travel.

For those looking to get involved in the project virtually, we meet every Tuesday at 6pm. Please email Lizzie Wilson (projects@ewbgreateraustin.org) if you would like to be included on our video calls.
Younger Member Forum News by Katherine Smith, EIT

Keep an eye out for more upcoming events this spring. 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:

ASCE YMF High School Senior Scholarship

The ASCE YMF scholarship for students in the Austin ASCE Branch region attending college in Fall 2020 is open. Please visit this link to find the application.

Keep on the look out for a kickball league! Let us know on Facebook or Instagram if you are interested!
Thank You To Our Branch Sponsors!

- mwm Design Group
- RS&H
- Stantec
- AGuirre & Fields
- The Rios Group
- AmeriTex

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