Strategic planning to guide ACEC future

Written by: Michael Obergfell, ACEC Indiana President 2017-18

As I reminisce on the past 30 years, I’m always amazed at the intellectual ability, dedication, morals and the willingness to get involved that so many of my mentors, colleagues and under-studies have displayed in their roles as protectors of the health, safety and welfare of the public we all serve. The ACEC-IN community is truly full of great individuals that have given so much to our society.

In that vein, I want to thank everyone who has volunteered their services to the greater good of our association, whether it was on one of our 13 committees, speaking at schools during Engineer’s Week, giving to the ACEC PACs, participating in our scholarship outings, advocating for our causes at the statehouse or in DC, or participating in one of our many luncheons or conferences.

I would also like to thank all those individuals that have come before me in serving on our Board of Directors, and especially all of our Past Presidents, that have given so much of their time in promoting and protecting our industry. ACEC is the place we can pool our collective resources for the good of our industry and make positive changes in the world around us, while always working to protect our companies’ business practices from outside sources that would like to think of us as commodities to be low bid. I often say to those that are thinking of joining, or leaving the ACEC-IN community, that I would hate to see where we would be without ACEC-IN fighting for us every day.

This past year was filled with many great accomplishments. ACEC-IN increased our National PAC giving and led the nation with reaching 170 percent of our goal, while also being first in the country again to reach our goal. That is truly exceptional and recognized at the national level at every conference.

We increased our State PAC giving as well, and will continue to set our goals higher so we can have even greater influence in the political process here at home. We awarded $20,000 in college scholarships to ensure we have future talent in the pipeline, and so much more.

However, nothing topped the role our members played in passing monumental transportation funding legislation via HB 1002. By all projections, the increased revenues will be well over $1B that will fund reconstruction and expansion of our highways and byways by 2021. So many of our members fought hard and gave willingly of their time to help make this happen, don’t lose sight of how big this accomplishment was, not only for our generation, but for those that will follow.

Our charge now will be to make sure we get the work done, help our clients spend the money wisely, and assist in educating the public on where their hard earned tax dollars are working for our great state.

I especially want to thank our fearless leader Beth and her trusty sidekick Colleen, Glenna Shelby and her team at the LegisGroup, our friends with the Build Indiana Council and all the legislators who worked tirelessly with us over the many years to make this happen.

Please make sure you thank your legislator (if they voted YES!) next time you see them, or take 5 minutes and send them a note now if you haven’t already. It is never easy to raise taxes, i.e. – user fees, but our legislators did it to ensure a solid future for Indiana.

So it’s time to take a break, right? Guess again! ACEC-IN has just gotten started. We recently had a planning retreat with about 25 ACEC-IN members to update our strategic plan, which you can view by clicking here.

Our tag line, “Engineering a Better Indiana” will lead us in our mission of protecting our business interests in the coming years. Our five strategic objectives were developed from member surveys where you told us why ACEC-IN is important to your firm, and ACEC-IN intends to deliver.

To accomplish these goals we are looking at hiring a third staff member this year to meet some of the new and expanded objectives and programs, and better serve our members. This is happening with no increase again this year in our dues formula, thanks to strong member recruitment and most, if not all of our firms growing!

You might also be saying we can take a break from the legislative process this year, looking back on the big accomplishments of this past session, but you’d be wrong. We’ve already started our next big push, which will be to build a water funding coalition, to start the battle of long-term, dedicated, stable and adequate (sound familiar?) funding for clean water, sewer upgrades and the overall water supply in Indiana. This, like transportation funding, may take years to accomplish, but I know we are up to the task.

I ask that each and every member join me, our Board and our staff in the coming year and get involved and give freely of your time to our organization. ACEC-IN is the only organization fighting for our business interests in Indiana. Together we can accomplish anything, divided we are doomed to fail.

Make your voice heard, we will listen. Thank you for the opportunity to serve our association, and thank you to all those that have come before us and built such an amazing organization.