IN FOCUS

Happy New Year! As we start 2018, resolutions will be made, and goals will be set.

The new year also signals the beginning of what should prove to be an interesting election year on both the state and federal levels. Advocacy is an important mission of ACEC, and your contributions to the ACEC PAC and PaCE PAC help to advance legislation and support candidates that will provide a favorable business climate for our industry. ACEC’s advocacy last year proved to be a strong lobby for consulting engineering firms, unlike some other service businesses who were left out of the tax reform bill.

Congress and the president have signaled infrastructure legislation will be front and center in the new year. Following his announcement that he’ll not be seeking re-election, Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Bill Shuster (PA-R) noted he’ll spend the year working on the infrastructure bill.

The following are up for grabs during the 2018 midterm election here in Pennsylvania:

- Governor’s race;
- A U.S. senate seat;
- All 18 U.S. representative seats;
- 25 state senate seats; and
- All 203 state house seats.

Resolutions in 2018 to consider:
• Contribute to the ACEC PAC;
• Contribute to the PaCE PAC;
• Encourage others to contribute to the national and state PACs;
• Attend and encourage others to attend the Government Affairs Committee breakfasts;
• Join and participate in the Government Affairs Committee; and
• Register and attend the ACEC Annual Convention and Legislative Summit in Washington, D.C., taking place April 15-18.

Joe O’Neil

President, ACEC/PA

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Workers’ compensation costs to increase following approval of mid-year cost hike filing
On Dec. 27, the Pennsylvania Department of Insurance announced its approval of the Pennsylvania Compensation Rating Bureau’s unprecedented mid-year loss cost increase filing, with a Feb. 1 effective date…Read more

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They're stacking up to take down Stack
Here’s how badly six Democrats want Mike Stack’s job…Read more

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Costello gets challenge from the right in GOP
A West Goshen man who said he strongly backs President Donald Trump and who has been active in conservative causes in the area for several years said last week that he plans to challenge incumbent U.S. Rep. Ryan Costello for the Republican nomination to the 6th Congressional District seat…Read more
Federal tax reform now law
In the final weeks of 2017, Congress passed and President Trump signed the first sweeping federal tax reform legislation in more than three decades… Read more

Special elections for 2 state House seats planned for May 15
Voters will fill two vacancies in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives on the same day as the spring primary… Read more

Congress returns to full to-do list
Congress is facing several pieces of must-pass legislation in the coming weeks… Read more

Republican super PAC to open Pennsylvania offices ahead of special election
… Read more

Joe Peters announces he's running for Lou Barletta's Congressional seat
Joe Peters on Monday entered the Republican primary race for the open 11th Congressional District seat that U.S. Rep. Lou Barletta is vacating… Read more

UPCOMING EVENTS

January Government Affairs Committee Breakfast featuring the 2018 Republican Gubernatorial Candidates
Wednesday, Jan. 10
Hershey Country Club

January Central Chapter Meeting with Bradley J. Heigel, P.E., Chief Engineer, Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission
Wednesday, Jan. 10
January Eastern Chapter Meeting with Michael P. Venuto, PE, PLS, Chief Engineer, Delaware River Port Authority
Tuesday, Jan. 16
The Desmond Hotel
Read more
Register now

February Western Chapter Meeting with Rich Fitzgerald, Allegheny County Executive
Friday, Feb. 2
Cefalo's Restaurant
Read more
Register now

2018 Diamond Awards Gala
Thursday, Feb. 22
Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square
Join us for an elegant evening recognizing engineering firms for projects that demonstrate a high degree of achievement, value and innovation.
Register now

Save the Date for the 2018 Annual Meeting
June 11-14, 2018
Gurney’s Newport Resort & Marina, Newport, RI
Details coming soon.
ACEC/PA Website Update
The new year has brought us some changes to the ACEC/PA website. You will notice the website has been reorganized in an effort to allow easier access to information that is important to you. Additional changes and upgrades will continue to be made over the next several weeks. We appreciate your patience while this enhancement is completed.

You Are ACEC/PA
We have 21 different committees looking for your leadership and expertise. Check out the committee page to see which one is for you. Those interested in learning more should contact the ACEC/PA office at (800) 651-1946 or ACEC/PA Executive Director Leeann Sherman.

Save the Date
ACEC Annual Convention
April 15-18, 2018
Washington, D.C.
Read more

Resources
Sexual Harassment Prevention in the A/E Workplace: Understanding the Law; and Establishing and Improving Policies, Procedures and Effective Training...Learn more

Designations and Certifications...Learn more

Fifteen courses are available for free to NSPE members...Learn more
In November, Cheryl Moon-Sirianni was named district executive of the state Department of Transportation’s District 11 division based near Bridgeville, replacing longtime executive Dan Cessna.

Moon-Sirianni, 52, grew up in Freeport and now lives in Economy. The 1987 Penn State University graduate began as a civil engineering intern at PennDOT in 1984, first in District 10 and then moving to work in District 11 in 1989. She is the first woman to ever lead District 11.

You’ve been working for PennDOT for nearly three decades, first as a civil engineer trainee and later holding a variety of positions with the department. What made you want to study civil engineering and work on public infrastructure projects?

I started as a petroleum engineer (major) at Penn State. That first summer (interning for PennDOT) I worked at a bridge rehab job in Kittanning. I found that to be so much more interesting than rock formations – being able to visually see what you’re working on and a feeling of accomplishment when something is finished. Knowing your friends and family are going to drive over these facilities also is very satisfying.

Being the first woman to lead District 11, what does that mean to you and PennDOT?
To me, just being the executive is a huge accomplishment regardless of your gender. Working for the department for more than 30 years, it’s very gratifying and flattering. We have wonderful people on staff and it’s a privilege to be their leader. I think anything a woman can do to show the younger women there is no glass ceiling or no limit is great for me to be a role model and mentor.
When you started with PennDOT, did you ever see yourself leading District 11?

As a young civil engineer, you just want to do a good job and possibly get promoted to the next level. I’ve taken my job day-by-day, but was promoted to this position. It’s good for younger engineers and employees to see that after a 30-year career, you’re not washed up. There are still opportunities for advancement. Raising a daughter, the good work-life balance sends a good message. I can honestly say I’ve never missed one of her events, lacrosse or orchestra. Working at PennDOT, you have to balance your meetings, work. Gina (her 20-year-old daughter) is going to school for industrial engineering. I used to drive her to all these public meetings when she was a kid. I guess it didn’t turn her off too bad. I don’t think a lot of young women set their sights on technical engineering like this because they don’t have a role model. Maybe me reaching out to them and letting them know the sky is the limit will encourage them.

How has your role within PennDOT changed over the years, and what will it be like now leading District 11?

I started as a bridge engineer and moved to the highway side. Lots of technical work, down and dirty. As you move up to project manager, you’re dealing with the public more. As contract management engineer, you keep growing. Your contacts grow as you deal with more organizations and stakeholders. Being assistant district executive in charge of design, you’re dealing with the public and municipal officials, and now I think it’s my job to establish relationships I don’t have and go to the ones I do have. Dealing with lots of the projects, it’s always interesting. At PennDOT, no two jobs are ever the same.

PennDOT District 11, which includes Allegheny, Beaver and Lawrence counties, is the second largest district in the state. Allegheny County has the largest state roadway system to manage. What are the biggest challenges facing PennDOT as a whole, but also District 11?

You always have to keep the roads safe, keep them on paving cycles, keep them safe in the winter. And funding is always the linchpin – make sure we have enough money to keep the salt and keep the folks working on the road, but also keep some money around for the summer for paving.

Besides road maintenance, what other challenges do you face?

We’re trying to keep a more diverse workforce. There aren’t as many women and minority workers. Maintenance and construction are predominately white males and we’re trying to reach out to other people who don’t know that PennDOT is a great place to work. I hope they can see there are the
same opportunities for them as I had if you work hard. We still need better outreach; sharing that positive message and getting input from municipalities and elected officials is important to making sure we’re tending to the needs of our community. It’s definitely a balancing act.

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ACEC/PA Needs Your Help

- Do you have committee news to share or know of a colleague/firm making a difference? We’d want to share that news! Please send ACEC/PA Executive Director [Leeann Sherman](mailto:Leeann_Sherman@acec-pa.org) the information for inclusion in an upcoming edition of *forward*.

- We want to communicate with you. Please take a moment to update your profile with us so you don’t miss any important news or events.

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**Did You Know?**

11 percent of people are left handed!

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There are only four words in the English language which end in 'dous' (hazardous, horrendous, stupendous and tremendous).

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Reminder: Clear your car of ice, snow. [Read more](#)

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Follow ACEC/PA on social media to keep up-to-date with the latest company news, industry highlights and benefit from a range of useful resources.

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