

THE FIRST WORD

June/July, 2012

Soltani to Lead ACEC OKLAHOMA in 2012-13 Budget Approved; No Dues Increase

Alan Soltani assumed the position of Chairman of the Board of ACEC OKLAHOMA at the conclusion of the Annual Convention in Branson, MO. Soltani is Senior Vice President - Director of Infrastructure for SAIC Energy, Environment & Infrastructure, of Oklahoma City.

Soltani earned a Ph.D. in Civil Engineering from the University of Oklahoma in 1995. In addition to his Bachelors (1977) and Masters (1990) of Engineering from OU, he also holds an MBA in Finance from Oklahoma City University.

Soltani joined SAIC, formerly The Benham Companies, in 2001. Prior to that, he was the Chief Traffic Engineer for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

Joining Soltani on the 2012-13 ACEC OKLAHOMA Board of Directors are:

- President Elect Chuck Mitchell, Crafton Tull, Tulsa
- Vice Chairman Membership Joe Davis, Triad Design Group, Oklahoma City
- Treasurer Brent Schniers, Garver, Tulsa
- Vice Chairman Business Practice Marty Hepp, Cobb Engineering, Oklahoma City
- Vice Chairman Education/PR Brandon Claborn, Meshek & Associates, Tulsa
- ACEC National Director Steve Ford, Zahl-Ford, Inc., Oklahoma City
- Immediate Past Chairman Stacy Loeffler, BKL, Inc., Tulsa



2012-13 Board of Directors (l-r) Front Row: Stacy Loeffler, Alan Soltani, Marty Hepp. Second Row: Joe Davis, Chuck Mitchell, Brent Schniers. Not pictured: Steve Ford, Brandon Claborn

During the Annual Convention, in addition to the election of Officers, the 2012-13 ACEC OKLAHOMA Operating Budget was approved, with no dues increase for the 2012-13 fiscal year.



Chairman Alan Soltani thanks outgoing Chairman Stacy Loeffler for your years of service to ACEC OKLAHOMA.



Chairman Loeffler (foreground) leads discussion at Annual Meeting.

Governor Fallin Signs Legislation Increasing Funding to ODOT & Counties; Eliminate 700+ Deficient Bridges by 2019

Gov. Mary Fallin signed two bills on Monday, June 4th, that she said would transform the state's transportation infrastructure.

A number of ACEC OKLAHOMA members attending this event held in the Blue Room of the Oklahoma State Capitol.

HB 2248 and HB 2249 will transform Oklahoma's transportation infrastructure from one that is inefficient to one that is much better, Fallin said during a signing ceremony at the Capitol.

Fallin was joined by Rep. T.W. Shannon, R-Lawton, the House author of the two bills. He said that transportation funding had been stagnant for many years until 2004. Monday's bill signing was the culmination of the efforts of great men and women since that time. HB 2248 and HB 2249 show that transportation funding is a priority, he said.

HB 2248, by Shannon and Sen. Bryce Marlatt, R-Woodward, increases from \$41.7 million to \$59.7 million the amount to be allocated to the Rebuilding Oklahoma Access and Driver Safety Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2013, and each fiscal year thereafter. It also increases from \$435 million to \$575 million the cap on the fund.

The \$18 million in additional dollars will allow the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to stay on track to fix the state's deficient bridges, Fallin said.

HB 2249, also by Shannon and Marlatt, modifies apportionment of fees, taxes and penalties collected under the Oklahoma Vehicle License and Registration Act to the General Revenue Fund, directing 29.34 percent to be apportioned for the years beginning Jan. 1, 2013, and ending June 30, 2013; 26.84 percent to be apportioned for the year beginning July 1, 2013, and ending June 30, 2013; 24.84 percent to be apportioned for the year beginning July 1, 2014, and all subsequent years. The bill directs that the 15 percent allocation to the County Improvements for Roads and Bridges Fund end Dec. 31, 2012. It directs 15.5 percent of the revenue be credited to the County

Improvements for Roads and Bridges Fund for the year beginning Jan. 1, 2013, and ending June 30, 2013; 18 percent of the revenue be credited to the same fund for the year beginning July 1, 2013, and ending June 30, 2014; and 20 percent of the revenue be credited to the fund beginning July 1, 2014, and all subsequent years.



ACEC OKLAHOMA well represented at Bill Signing. Some of those attending pictured with Governor Mary Fallin are: Sam Pappas, MacArthur Associated Consultants; Karl Stickley, Guernsey; ACEC OKLAHOMA Chairman Alan Soltani, SAIC; Ed Donwerth, Guernsey; Governor Fallin; ACEC OKLAHOMA President Jim Sullins

Under the bill, the increases in revenue allocated to the County Improvements for Roads and Bridges Fund total \$1.7 million in FY2013; \$21 million in FY2014; and \$31 million in FY2015, according to the fiscal analysis prepared by House staff. In addition to funding county bridge repairs, the funds will also support the innovative re-use of steel beams from the Interstate 40 Crosstown on county

bridge projects, Fallin said. More than 1,800 steel beams are expected to be salvaged for use on the county system, she said.

The two bills support the governor's Bridge Improvement and Turnpike Modernization Plan, which she announced in October, to address the 706 bridges on the state system that are deemed "structurally deficient," meaning structural members of the bridge are showing signs of deterioration and the bridge needs to be significantly rehabilitated or replaced.

With the resources provided under HB 2248 and HB 2249, the number of deficient bridges will be reduced from 706 to 0 by 2019, Fallin said.

The responsibility of putting the resources to action now lies with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, said ODOT Director and Secretary of Transportation Gary Ridley.

"This is a big day for transportation in Oklahoma, maybe the biggest day that I've seen," Ridley said.

The third part of Fallin's plan calls for the widening of the Kilpatrick and Creek turnpikes. Contracts for these efforts have already been issued, Fallin said.

Congressman James Lankford Briefs ACEC OKLAHOMA on Federal Highway Legislation & Other Key Issues

ACEC OKLAHOMA met with 5th District Congressman James Lankford on Tuesday, June 12th in Oklahoma City, to discuss a variety of issues important to the consulting engineering community of Oklahoma.

Congressman Lankford provided an update on the pending federal highway legislation and other bills which will come to the forefront prior to and following the November Elections.

The Congressman is a member of the House/Senate Conference Committee which is currently meeting to negotiate the final version of the reauthorization of the federal highway bill. The current bill expired over two years ago, and is only being kept in place through a series of continuing resolutions, the latest of which will expire on June 30th. If a final resolution is not reached by that time by the Conference Committee, yet another Continuing Resolution will be necessary to avoid a complete shutdown of highway projects nationwide.

Congressman Lankford reported that good progress was being made on a large portion of the bill, but that there were several major stumbling blocks still yet to be addressed,

including the final funding levels and what sources of revenue would be used to accomplish the funding requirements.

The appointment of Lankford, in only his first term, to the Conference Committee was a major surprise as it is very rare that Freshmen members are appointed to such an important Conference. And, with Senator Jim Inhofe being on the Senate side of the Conference, Oklahoma is very well positioned.

Lankford said that he thinks that House Chairman John Mica and Senate Chair Barbara Boxer were very motivated to secure a final resolution before a new Congress begins in January, but that it may be after the November elections before a final bill is secured.

The Congressman also addressed other key issues, including the Keystone Pipeline, defense spending, and, major budgetary issues which Congress must address very soon.

ACEC OKLAHOMA thanked the Congressman for his efforts on the federal highway program, and, in turn, he urged us to stay in contact with him and thanked us for our support.



Pictured L-R: Lance Benham, SAIC; Brent Schniers, Garver; Bret Cabbiness, Cabbiness Engineering; Wallace Smith, SAIC; Marty Hepp, Cobb Engineering; Congressman Lankford; Alan Soltani, SAIC; Jim Benson, Poe & Associates; Steve Ford, Zahl-Ford, Inc.; Mike Homan, Terracon; David Neuhauser, CP&Y; Todd Cochran, The Schemmer Associates. ACEC OKLAHOMA presented the Congressman with a \$5,000 contribution from ACECPAC, ACEC's national political action committee.

PRESIDENT'S MONTHLY UPDATE

David Raymond, ACEC President & CEO

As we head into the summer months leading up to the November election, ACEC's agenda remains focused on infrastructure funding, contracting out and tax relief. A House-Senate Conference Committee is in throes of reconciling a two-year Senate transportation bill with a 90-day House extension. Last week we helped defeat a proposed payroll tax increase on S corporations. We are upping our attention to all tax issues as they begin to receive heightened interest with the pending expiration of the Bush tax cuts at the end of the year. We have sought to stem the tide of increased insourcing by public agencies through Congressional action and representations with federal and states agencies. At the same time, our Management Practices Committee has established an Infrastructure Finance Subcommittee to examine alternative forms of finance for public infrastructure; as part of this effort, we have also initiated development a model EJCDC contract document for P3s.

General

- Met with senior leadership of the Corps of Engineers to discuss priority areas of mutual interest including need for greater infrastructure funding and industry concerns over insourcing.

**ACEC OKLAHOMA Office
will be closed
Monday, June 25th thru
Wednesday, July 4th.**

**I will be checking email and
voicemail regularly
and will respond as convenient
and appropriate.**

- Results from ACEC's annual certification show stability in overall member firm numbers and an increase in overall employee strength of those firms (+2.6% at the state level and +4.5% at the national level).

Government Affairs

- President Obama signed into law ACEC-backed legislation to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank including increased lending capacity to support the export of engineering services.
- Defeated a proposed payroll tax increase on S corporation owners.
- Lobbied for extension of 100 percent bonus depreciation in 2012, and for a provision to make it easier for firms that convert to S corporations to access their own capital without paying a tax penalty.
- Maintained strong drumbeat of lobbying pressure (ACEC members sent more than 1,000 emails, letters to Congress) to finalize a long-term transportation bill before current extension expires at end of June.
- Assisted ACEC/Indiana and ACEC/Michigan with state DOT audit issues.
- Hosted congressional fundraising events for Reps. Randy Hultgren (R-IL), Tom Latham (R-IA), Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), Allyson Schwartz (D-PA), Daniel Webster (R-FL), Sam Graves (R-MO), Doc Hastings (R-WA), Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) Devin Nunes (R-CA), and Pete Visclosky (D-IN).

