PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

It is already the middle of Summer and we have had immeasurable growth both from a membership and corporate sponsorship standpoint. I want to personally congratulate our Board. Their commitment has been vital in reaching the goals set at the beginning of the year. The transparent flow of knowledge throughout all of our committees provides opportunities to meet our mission and vision.

Every day we make choices in how we lead our mission. Democracy plays a part in this mission. We all are promoters of the same common goal – to support and promote women in the transportation industry. I applaud the women that lead this Chapter. It is because of you that we have exceeded what we had hoped to and I am looking forward to what the future holds for WTS Connecticut!

Please join us at our upcoming Summer Social on August 8th at Paradise Hills Vineyard. And, as always, thanks to our Corporate Sponsors! We truly appreciate your support.

WTS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CALIFORNIA

The 2018 WTS Annual Conference was held on Coronado Island in Southern California from May 16th through 18th with the theme Driving the Waves of Change. There were presentations on Resiliency and Sustainability, Funding and Policy, Autonomous Transportation Future and Mindful Leadership, Mentorship, and Collaboration. WTS CT members Lauren DiGiovanni, Rebeca Hall, Lori Long, Carrie Rocha, Nancy Rolfe, Lisa Slonus, and Susan VanBenschoten attended the conference.

Lori Long, who has been a member of WTS for more than 20 years and has attended about 15 international conferences said that each year the conferences raise the bar and San Diego was no exception, she stated it was one of the best conferences she had attended. Lori was fortunate to attend a Strategic Planning Corporate Sponsor session with WTS International Leaders, where she learned of the details of their ideas for the immediate future and beyond. She was able to talk candidly about guidance for our local chapter and moving forward what the WTS International Leaders need from Connecticut. (article continued on page 6 of this newsletter)
On January 17, 2018, Kenneth Fargnoli presented best practices for management with an engaging discussion describing great leadership vs ineffective leadership. He stressed the importance of the words you choose and how you use them, emphasizing the effect words have on people. Ken kept everyone laughing with his video collection and a lively group discussion about what it takes to be a good leader. He shared his own experience with a great mentor to stress the importance of engaging with someone who cares about your success and who is sincere in helping you in personal and professional advancement.

Ken provided great practical examples of how attendees could mentor their own employees, or at least show empathy towards each other. A discussion regarding micromanagers and how they erode relationships and foster distrust. We also learned about the effect of kindness on employees, and the development of mutual professional respect, regardless of your feelings about that person. The servant leader creates an environment where people communicate clearly, trust and respect each other, and feel valued enough to give their best work.

CALL FOR PAPERS FOR THE 2018 TRANSPORTATION MINI-SERIES

Click here for more information!

Interested in becoming a member? Contact Lisa Slonus at slonusl@wseinc.com

“IT’S ALL ABOUT SERVING” - LEADERSHIP MODULE

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CACT/WTS LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST– HARTFORD, CT

The 2018 Annual Legislative Breakfast was well attended on February 28th at the State Capitol. WTS CT Chapter co-sponsors this event with the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT). DOT Commissioner James Redeker’s key note speech went into detail about the state of the transportation budget and the importance of coming to a transportation funding solution. The CEO of Greater Bridgeport Transit, Doug Holcomb, gave a presentation on the detrimental impacts to service if the budget cuts were to be implemented. Finally, CACT Executive Director Mary Tomolonius presented an overview on bus operations and how important transit is to the viability of Connecticut.
NAVIGATING RELATIONSHIPS-LEADERSHIP MODULE

On April 6, 2018, Cheryl Malerba, Connecticut Department of Transportation, conducted a session on the timely topic of Sexual Harassment Prevention and gave some tools to navigate the tricky relationships we sometimes encounter in the workplace. The #METOO movement has empowered people to insist on respect anywhere, especially at work, and we need a stronger cultural awareness of the nuances of sexual harassment to move forward in the right direction.

“Harassment is about power and the abuse of power.” And it takes many more forms than the traditional quid pro quo scenario we all remember from training. Some things to watch for in yourself or your coworkers are lost productivity, lack of engagement, unprovoked anger, excessive use of sick days, and poor performance reviews. These may be signs of harassment. A good leader, a caring coworker, or a concerned friend should talk to the employee and offer assistance.

One way to protect your self is to build a “personal armor.” That means understanding yourself and building internal strategies to stay out of harm’s way. And you need to know the rules of the road. When you are at work, focus on work. If you meet someone interesting (we know it happens!) keep it off the clock. Remember, it’s about power, so if you supervise this “interesting” coworker, you could be playing with fire. If you are interested in a person who supervises you, consider possible outcomes and decide what risks you are willing to take. Know your mental state and examine ways to reduce your risk of being harassed. Just having this awareness allows you some control over the outcome. Have your “line” ready when you are confronted by unwanted attention! Be consistent with your message, and increasingly assertive, if necessary.

Know the laws and policies! Balance those with your own self-awareness and you can create a healthy work environment and establish a culture of respect for everyone.
STUDENT OUTREACH - STEM EVENT

On February 21, 2018, WTS CT hosted its first STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) event at the Cora J. Belden Library in Rocky Hill, Connecticut. The “Engineers Inspiring Wonder” event was held to help young minds explore the opportunities in STEM careers.

The evening was scheduled to coincide with the annual Celebration of National Engineers Week. Students in grade 4 to 12 were given the opportunity to connect with female scientists from the WTS Connecticut Chapter and experience the excitement of engineering with amazing hands-on activities. Activities included, water filter construction, Transportation Planning using Legos, Engineering Mystery Bag Challenge, and testing a simple span bridge vs a suspension bridge.

The committee plans to make this an annual event and work to include more industry women to inspire the next generation of engineers and scientists.

Volunteers needed for student outreach events! Please contact Nancy Rolfe at nancy.rolfe@aecom.com if you are interested.

WORK ZONE SAFETY PRESENTATION

On February 22, 2018, at a CCSU Dinner during Civil Engineer’s Week, the topic of “Work Zone Safety” was presented by Nancy Rolfe, P.E. A civil engineer at AECOM.

Highway engineering is a branch of civil engineering that involves the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of roads, bridges, and tunnels to ensure safe and effective transportation of people and goods. Equally important to the finished “product” of a safe road or structure is maintaining mobility of traffic, reducing work zone traffic incidents, and providing safety for roadway users and work zone personnel during construction.

Presentation by Nancy Rolfe, P.E. of AECOM at CCSU

Brenda Zhou, PH.D, P.E. a professor at CCSU and the WTS CT Chapter Student Outreach Co-Chair, showcasing bridge testing

Andrea Drabicki, Transportation Planner at AECOM and WTS CT Chapter Student Outreach participant, explaining roadway / sidewalk and community planning
STUDENT OUTREACH EVENT - WOMEN TAKE FLIGHT

The event is an annual celebration of women’s contributions to aerospace history and innovation, both past and present. Held on March 3, 2018 at the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks, CT. The program featured guest speakers, Melissa Mathiasen, test pilot for Sikorsky Aircraft, MSgt. Dana Willette, Flight Engineer, C-5M Super Galaxy 438th Airlift Wing/337th Airlift Squadron, and Catherine Young, General Aviation Airports Business Developer for Connecticut Airport Authority and WTS CT Advisory Council Member.

Visitors got to meet women pilots, engineers and industry professionals, take to the skies via the interactive flight simulators, discover history of women in aerospace, and participate in hands-on STEM activities.

WTS CT Chapter hosted a STEM activity table where visitors were invited to build a glider out of index card strips and a straw. The kids and adults were asked, “Do you think it will fly?” and yes they did fly actually quite well. This simple activity was a great way to learn about the aerodynamics of flight and Newton’s Third Law of Motion. Nancy Rolfe, P.E., at AECOM single handedly manned the activity table for WTS CT, and communicated with young folks regarding interesting transportation careers.

STUDENT OUTREACH EVENT - WESTOVER CAREER DAY

On April 12, 2018, WTS-CT Student Outreach Committee hosted an event called “Sharing our Story & Changing the face of Transportation Workforce”. Katie Hedberg of VN Engineers, who is a WTS CT Student Outreach Participant and Member planned a fun day for students starting off with a presentation and three activities led by Nancy Rolfe, P.E., an engineer with AECOM, and Brenda Zhou, a professor from CCSU.

The day started at Westover School in Middlebury, Connecticut, speaking with girls and a crash course presentation on civil engineering. Nancy Rolfe, P.E., of AECOM, offered a fun quiz “Is Engineering Right for You” then discussed her background and the things she loves about civil engineering. Brenda Zhou facilitated a 3D drawing challenge and then spoke about college opportunities in civil engineering. Katie Hedberg, an alumni of Westover School, spoke about her background and career path. Katie then led the girls into the field for a sample fieldwork assignment similar to a project she is currently working on related to roadway curves and traffic sign layout. The girls then visited the office of VN Engineers.
WTS 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE (continued)

Lori Long also shared that the WTS International Conference is an event not to be missed for this reason, “Networking with women and men in your industry outside of work”, is an enlightening experience and opens your mind to new ideas and ways to approach everyday tasks and movements within your career. Each year that she is able to attend is a new and different experience. She has found that the more connections you make the more you get out each conference.

Nancy Rolfe, who has attended four international conferences in Philadelphia, Chicago, New York, and now San Diego, shared that her favorite session was Toll Relief: Reinventing Equity for Mobility. This session discussed the Virginia Department of Transportation’s Toll Relief program for residents using the Elizabeth River Tunnels (ERTs). This program is the first in the nation to provide meaningful financial relief to qualified residents who travel the ERTs.

Along with attending many informative sessions, meeting WTS members from across the country, and attending keynote sessions with Anousheh Ansari, the first female private space explorer and Lauren Leader-Chivee, the founder and CEO of All in Together WTS CT members were able to come together to brainstorm sessions to bring back to Connecticut and enjoy themselves in sunny Southern California!

We encourage everyone to attend the 2019 WTS International Conference, The Hub of Ingenuity, in Boston May 15th through 17th.
HAVE YOU CONSIDERED BECOMING A CORPORATE SPONSOR?

A sponsorship of WTS Connecticut offers vital mutual benefits to WTS and your company.

WTS Connecticut offers outstanding networking and professional development opportunities for transportation industry employees and leaders at every level.

WTS offers informative programs, scholarships for students, mentoring program, and information exchange through our newsletter and website (including job postings).

For more information on the Corporate Sponsorship Program please contact our Corporate Sponsor Liaison, Lori Long at lori.long@aecom.com.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE—CTDOT OPEN HOUSE

On Monday, April 23, 2018, Lisa Slonus, P.E., at Weston and Sampson coordinated an open house at the Connecticut Department of Transportation. 80 people in attendance. Employees of the department were invited to hear the testimonials of many long time members of WTS Connecticut Chapter, the organization’s mission, events, and the many benefits. A light lunch was served and once speakers were finished an open forum of questions were presented and a lively discussion regarding the details of this organization.

This event led to ten new WTS Connecticut Chapter Members, welcome to those who joined on April 23, 2018.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

**CHAPTER BENEFITS**
- Professional Development & Networking
- Leadership Opportunities & Growth
- **FREE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM NEW!!**
- Career Support
- Mentor Program
- Student Outreach
- Annual Awards & Scholarships

**INTERNATIONAL BENEFITS**
- Annual Conference
- Mentor Program - Executive & Mid-Level
- Scholarships
- Annual Awards
- Knowledge Lab
- Trans-Portal

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On Thursday, April 19, 2018 the WTS Connecticut Chapter celebrated its annual Awards and Scholarship Banquet at the beautiful St. Clements Castle. This year’s event was awesome, with record setting attendance, as industry members joined together to celebrate individual and collective accomplishments in the transportation industry.

Keynote speaker, Bonnie J. Malley from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving kicked off the evening. Following this motivational talk, Nicole Nalepa from WFSB 3 Connecticut received recognition as our newest WTS CT honorary member. Nicole hosted our 25th Anniversary Gala last fall and we are very excited she has joined our organization. Congratulations to Tiffany Garcia from CTDOT and Lexi Petrella from VN Engineers, Inc. for completing the Mentorship Program.

The Innovative Project of the Year was presented to the Greater Hartford Transit District ADA Paratransit Operations and Maintenance Facility. The much-deserved Employer of the Year award was given to WSP. Lisa Slonus, Project Manager for Weston & Sampson, received the prestigious Member of the Year award, the recognition is well deserved. The Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award was presented to Tiffany Garcia for her equal employment opportunity specialist work at CTDOT. Great work to all the individuals and companies that were recognized for their dedication and initiatives to advance women in transportation. We are so proud of all your accomplishments.

WTS CT scholarships were awarded to three qualified applicants. The Emerging Professional Scholarship was awarded to Megan Leether from WSP. Katherine Gosselin, from UCONN, was awarded the Sharon D. Banks Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship. And Adrita Islam, also a UCONN student was awarded the Helene M. Overly Memorial Graduate Scholarship. Congratulations on their hard work. We know you will do great in your respective fields.

The evening concluded with the Woman of the Year Award given to Susan D. VanBenschoten for her leadership at Fitzgerald & Halliday. Her acceptance speech was timely and motivational.

We are thankful to all of our corporate sponsors, our organization members and all who contributed to another great event. Let’s continue to work together to promote diversity in transportation, it’s a win for everyone.
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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT-CANDY PHILLIPS

Over 500 high school females flocked to the third eastern Mass Girls in Trades Conference and Career Fair at the IBEW Local 103 in Dorchester, Massachusetts. This event, held on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, was sponsored by a partnership of educational, governmental and trade organizations such as Building Pathways, Inc., with a shared goal of supporting and encouraging female career and technical education students and alumnae to pursue careers in the skilled trades. WTS CT Chapter Diversity Co-Chair, Candy Phillips, currently serves on the Building Pathways Employer Advisory Committee representing Lane Construction Corporation, and attended the event to share information about careers at Lane.

During the event, high school girls currently enrolled in career technical education programs were connected to employment opportunities, participated in educational workshops, and were provided encouragement to consider pursuing a career in the skilled union trades. Participants were engaged with hands-on activities, met face-to-face with women working in the field, and learned how to leverage their educational and training experiences to begin successful careers in the construction industry.

One of Candy’s major goals is to build a pipeline of qualified workers while expanding opportunities for minorities and women in the construction industry! In efforts to achieve this goal, Candy works with community partners to implement a program designed for the construction industry that includes the following features:

- Providing training through the Building Pathways Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship Program to prepare 65 participants to enter into a Building Trades Registered Apprenticeship Program or other transportation-related employment on an annual basis;
- Involvement of employer and union partners in designing assessment/screening protocols and in developing training program curricula to ensure that they are aligned with entry requirements for jobs in the construction/transportation industry;
- Develop strategies that address enrollment, occupational and academic skills instructions, job development, job placement, advancement and retention outcomes for the specific identified target population and target occupation(s); and
- Provide support for hiring and apprenticeship of program graduates.

Through her participation in events like the Mass Girls Trade Event, and her involvement with the Building Pathways Program, it is evident she continues to take the steps to achieve her goal!

Candy has 30 years of experience as an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action/Diversity manager and consultant. As the Equal Employment Opportunity/Diversity Manager for Lane, Candy is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of diversity and inclusion, equal employment opportunity, and affirmative action programs to ensure federal and state compliance.

In addition to serving on the Connecticut Chapter of the Women’s Transportation Seminar (WTS) as the Diversity Committee Co-Chair, Candy is also a member of the National Association of African Americans in Human Resources (NAAHR), the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM) and the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP). Candy is also actively involved in the community serving as Chair of the Dr. John E. Rogers African American Committee – Hartford Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and volunteering for Habitat for Humanity.

*In June 2018, Candy accepted a position as the Director of the Office of Diversity & Equity with the Department of Children and Families.*
NEW HAVEN RAIL YARD TOUR

On Thursday, May 10, 2018, WTS partnered with AACE and CMMA to tour the New Haven Rail Yard including the Component Change Out and the Wheel True Shops. The event was a sell out with over 60 people in attendance. Networking and Dinner were followed by a presentation from Mike Mendick P.E., CCM, Assistant District Engineer for the CTDOT’s District 1A. Mike is managing the construction of several projects at the New Haven Rail Yard. The presentation began with history of the railroad and basic details of the interesting concept of how components are changed out in this shop to get trains back in operation.

Metro North’s Jay Patel and Jim Heimbuecher lead the tour if the 2 faculties and shared their knowledge of how equipment is changed out and the many safeguards that keep the employees safe. The event was very successful through all the efforts of WTS, AACE and CMMA. Thank you to the Mike, Jay and Jim for taking the time out of your busy schedules, it was greatly appreciated.

Do you have comments or suggestions on how we can improve the newsletter? Do you have an article you would like to submit?

Please contact:

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E-mail: alicia.leite@ct.gov

This newsletter was compiled and edited by both Alicia Leite and Lori Long Current WTS CT Chapter Newsletter Co-Chairs
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