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President’s Message

On behalf of the WTS Board of Directors and our co-host ITE, please “Save the Date” for the 4th Annual Transportation Mini Series, which will be held on Thursday, October 14th. The exciting, day-long event promises several morning and afternoon sessions on a variety of important transportation issues. And, this year, we have a few new features, and a few surprises! We hope to see you there.

The theme of this year’s Transportation Mini Series is Planes, Trains, and Automobiles… The theme recognizes the critical importance of each transportation mode in the overall transportation system. The “dot-dot-dot” reflects the fact that transportation issues are multi-modal, interdisciplinary, and affect our quality of life. We all want to reside, work, and visit “livable communities.” Livable communities provide us with mobility and connections; communities that have a “sense of place” and are sustainable.

The importance of each mode in our transportation system is undeniable. First, let’s take airplanes. The recent eruption of Iceland’s Eyjafjallajökull volcano demonstrated how critical this mode is by disrupting global airplane travel, and countless people’s lives, for weeks.

Secondly, the fluctuations in gas prices we’ve seen over the past decade, the critical role fossil-fuels play in global climate change, and the daily traffic congestion many of us experience on Connecticut’s highways are all reasons to feature the automobile in this year’s Transportation Mini Series. What are the latest developments in alternative fueled vehicles? Can we increase Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards in a meaningful way? Why aren’t more of us telecommuting? And, does the political will in Connecticut exist to take on critics of electronic tolling? Electronic tolling can both generate revenue for the state and alleviate traffic congestion.

Thirdly, the U.S. rail system is in dire need of infrastructure improvements. Thankfully, high speed rail is on the federal government’s front burner with the recent $8 billion promised for investment. Connecticut and our neighboring states are poised to benefit from some of this investment.

* * * * *

Congratulations to the 2009 WTS Connecticut Valley Chapter’s annual awards winners, scholarship recipient, and everyone who participated in and graduated from our first annual Mentorship Program. And, thank you so much to those who joined WTS at the April 8th Annual Awards & Scholarship Dinner to celebrate the contributions and achievements of our awards winners, scholarship recipient, and mentors & apprentices.

* * * * *

The WTS Board of Directors is pleased to welcome its newest Board Member: Patrycia Padlo of Wilbur Smith Associates. In recognition of her months of service to the Events Committee, Patrycia is now Events Committee Co-Chair. Thank you and welcome aboard, Patrycia!

As always, please call or email me anytime with ideas for how the WTS Board of Directors can better serve you, our Members and Corporate Sponsors!

Laurel Stegina
WTS - Connecticut Valley Chapter President

Calendar of Events

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Mountain Laurel Sponsors

[Images and logos of sponsors]
WTS Participates in Engineers Week

WTS was a sponsor of the Connecticut Engineers Week Dinner held on February 23rd. Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) Commissioner Joseph Marie was the program’s featured speaker. He addressed the State of Connecticut’s transportation funding challenges, including a backlog in transportation system preservation projects totaling approximately $4 billion. These preservation projects, which go beyond simple maintenance, are desperately needed to address the state’s aging infrastructure. The preservation projects will take priority over some of the state’s new initiatives. The federal reauthorization of the surface transportation bill will likely not take place this year, which will further limit the funding available to the state.

Commissioner Marie said that high priority projects, those important to the region and the state, such as New Haven-Hartford-Springfield and New Britain to Hartford Busway, will go forward as scheduled. The New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Commuter Rail project received over $40 million in federal funding to complete double tracking of the rail corridor. The New Britain to Hartford Busway has received $45 million in federal funding.

Contributed by Laurel Stigna

“...National Engineers Week recognizes engineers and celebrates engineering achievements that have improved and advanced our lives...”

In Appreciation of Our Corporate Sponsors

On March 4th, WTS - CVC hosted a Corporate Sponsor Breakfast event at Alina’s Restaurant in Wallingford, CT. The Breakfast was attended by over 22 folks, including our corporate sponsors, representatives from the Board of Directors and several committee members. WTS - CVC held this special, intimate occasion to thank our corporate sponsors for their dedication to and support of WTS.

The event provided our corporate sponsors with an opportunity to share some of their suggestions for WTS events and programs. Breakfast was followed by informal discussion with many enthusiastic ideas shared and expressed by all.

Our Corporate sponsors showed a continued interest in a WTS sponsor Golf tournament. As a result, we are looking into hosting a WTS - CVC Golf Tournament in 2011!

The sponsors and members also expressed interest in more opportunities to connect with college students and ideas for getting involved with high school students as well.

It was refreshing to have so many dedicated members gather together for a hearty meal and to spend some one-on-one time with our corporate sponsors!

Contributed by Terri Albanese
On February 24th, WTS Connecticut Valley Chapter co-hosted a breakfast for state legislators at the State Capitol. The Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT) co-hosted the event. Gloria Mills, CACT Executive Director, presented on Connecting Connecticut Public Transportation in the 21st Century. She spoke on the State’s public bus services, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) para-transit program, and the non-ADA Dial-a-Ride program.

According to CACT, Connecticut residents and travelers in fiscal year 2009 made almost 38.2 million trips on public bus services (including ADA para-transit and non-ADA-Dial-a-Ride) and resulted in reduced traffic congestion and fuel consumption in the state. Public transportation helps people, including senior citizens, students, single mothers, and people with disabilities, remain independent with trips to work and to school, as well as to medical appointments, to shops, and to places of worship. Operating deficits and funding shortfalls threaten the stability of Connecticut’s public transportation system and those who depend on it.

Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) Commissioner Joseph Marie was a guest speaker at the breakfast and addressed the funding challenges facing the State of Connecticut. He said the State of Connecticut needs to look beyond the gas tax as a source of funding, as vehicles become more efficient and drivers seek to drive less. He said that tolling is one option.

State Senator Toni Boucher (R-26th District serving Bethel, New Canaan, Redding, Ridgefield, Weston, Westport, and Wilton) spoke to attendees saying the Transportation Committee is working to address the State’s revenue and funding for public transportation. Although tolls are unpopular, electronic methods like E-ZPass are being explored. Despite funding issues, some exciting new public transportation initiatives are coming online in 2010 including:

- Greater Bridgeport Transit (GBT) will begin using a web-based system to provide bus arrival and departure information. Web Watch will bring GBT bus information to the desktops and fingertips of bus riders and travelers.
- Greater New Haven Transit District (GNHTD) is engaged in a environmentally friendly hydrogen fuel transit bus demonstration program. Fueling station and vehicles are scheduled to debut in September. The HyRide project is part of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Research and Development program for the hydrogen vehicles.
- The CTDOT is including design provisions for stationary fuel cell power in new major facilities, including new transit maintenance facilities. — Contributed by Laurel Stegina

Laurel Stegina welcomes attendees to the Legislative Breakfast.

From left: Brooke Hoberman, Shawna Bartkus, Laurel Stegina & Lori Long
WTS Reaches Out to College Students

Ms. Carla Tillery of FHI was invited to speak in March at the University of Connecticut in Storrs at the Professional Issues Seminar Series on Leadership and Development. The audience of 80 civil engineering students listened intently as Ms. Tillery spoke of her career and experiences. She also explained the qualities of a good leader and how development of professional skills should be continued throughout one’s career. Ms. Tillery invited WTS to participate in the event. Lori Long of PB attended to represent the Connecticut Valley Chapter. She spoke on professional organizations and their overall benefits both personally and professionally.

Ms. Tillery said that becoming a good leader is hard work; it involves certain characteristics such as enthusiasm and confidence. A leader is one that inspires colleagues to reach goals and be successful. A successful leader also works well under pressure and keeps their cool while continuing to keep their eye on the prize with a commitment to excellence. Ms. Tillery explained that the good qualities of a good leader are basically common sense.

Ms. Tillery asked the class to participate in a “game” that involved communication. Accurate communication was the key, and ultimately the team with the best form of communication was the winner. Ms. Tillery stressed that “good communication equals success.” She explained that this advice could be used for both their personal and professional lives.

As Ms. Tillery explained these common sense tactics, she drove home the idea that everyone could be a leader and learn communication skills, which is paramount to success and to meeting personal and professional goals.

WTS will continue to reach out to college students in transportation fields and share our knowledge and experiences. If you have college connections and are interested in having a WTS member speak at a student program, please feel free to contact Lori Long at longl@phworld.com or any of our Board members. Additionally, please share our enthusiasm for connecting with transportation bound college students, and let them know about WTS’ annual scholarships. For more information about WTS scholarships, please contact the WTS CT Valley Scholarship Co-Chairs Lauren DiGiovanni or Shavani Mahajan.

Contributed by Lori Long

In honor to celebrate Connecticut at its 375th Anniversary

Connecticut at 375:
The great State of Connecticut is celebrating its 375th Birthday in 2010 and we are celebrating by highlighting the citizens and achievements of the past 375 years. This year will be an educational, entertaining and unforgettable one for the young and old who call Connecticut home and I hope you too will join us in marking this historic milestone. ~ M. Jodi Rell, Governor

Connecticut River is the longest river in New England? 407 mi (655 km) long, rising in the Connecticut Lakes, North of New Hampshire, near the Quebec border, and flowing South along the VT-NH line, then across Massachusetts and Connecticut to enter Long Island Sound at Old Saybrook, Connecticut; drains 11,250 mile² (29,100 km²). Holyoke Falls, at 57 ft (17 m), is the highest of many falls and rapids. The river is navigable to Hartford, CT. Connecticut Valley is one of the best agricultural regions in New England. World-famous cigar binder and wrapper tobacco are grown in the lower part of the valley; truck farming and dairying are also important. Connecticut’s water power led to the rise of industrial cities along the river in the 19th century, and the valley became a manufacturing region; large centers include Holyoke and Springfield, Mass., and Windsor, Conn. Several hydroelectric and nuclear facilities also lie along the river. After severe 1953 floods, the CT River Flood Control Compact was established to sponsor flood-control measures on the river.

Source: from the Encyclopedia
WTS CT Valley Annual Awards Reception

WTS held its Annual Awards Reception on April 8th at Cascade in Hamden. This annual event honors women who are leaders in the transportation industry and have shown extraordinary commitment to the goals and growth of WTS. It honors those firms that have enhanced the transportation industry through their commitment to excellence and quality services, have an outstanding record of affirmative action in hiring and promoting at all levels, support continuing education, and encourage women students to enter the transportation field. An award is also given for innovative transportation solutions. This award is for a local project or service whose transportation element has contributed to the success of the initiative, supports key community values, and has overcome obstacles to build.

This year WTS-CVC was honored to award the Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award as well. This award recognizes astute organizations, companies, and innovative individuals that are broadening their multi-cultural initiatives, and changing corporate cultures and philosophies.

Before kicking off the awards, WTS International Executive Director Marica Ferranto addressed attendees. Marcia thanked those in attendance for supporting WTS and expressed her wishes to see WTS International support its chapters more directly and better give to its company sponsors. Marcia is currently on a “listening tour” to learn these things specifically.

This year’s Woman of the Year was awarded to Amy Jackson-Grove, Division Administrator for the Connecticut Division of the Federal Highway Administration. Amy is a large supporter of WTS; she served as moderator for the rail discussion at the 2009 Transportation Mini-Series and will be serving as a mentor under the WTS Mentoring Program 2010/11 season.

Connecticut Department of Transportation was the recipient of Employer of the Year. Commissioner Marie and Cheryl Malerba, Chief of Staff, spoke on behalf of the Department in accepting this award. Commissioner Marie reflected on the women role models he’s had throughout his career and those within CTDOT that influence the program and move efforts forward. Cheryl seconded the efforts of the women within CTDOT and stated how proud she was that such an organization supported women within the transportation industry in Connecticut.

Innovative Transportation Solutions Award recipient the HAKS team.
Member of the Year was awarded to Kim Tran of STV Incorporated. Kim joined WTS in 2008. She is an energetic and spirited member that chairs the WTS Newsletter Committee and Connecticut Chapter website. She has developed the newsletter and website into references for members and non-members looking for information on what’s happening in Connecticut with WTS and transportation.

Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award was awarded to the Greater Bridgeport Transit’s (GBT) Diversity Committee. The Diversity Committee is comprised of a cross-section of 10 employees of GBT. This committee is voluntary and has no budget, yet their efforts are wholly supported by GBT. The committee addresses human resources issues such as improving internal communications and interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, and achieving service quality and employee productivity and efficiency. The Committee places a high value on mutual respect and acknowledges the differences people bring to the workplace.

The GBT Diversity Committee has contributed significantly to promoting diversity, inclusion and multi-cultural awareness within their organization and within their community.

Innovative Transportation Solutions of the Year was awarded to HAKS for the Gold Star Bridge over Thames River Gusset Plates. HAKS was awarded this project, along with 9 other steel truss bridges. The project involved inspection after guidelines for analysis and evaluation for gusset plates was issued by FHWA due to the collapse of the I-35 West Bridge in Minneapolis.

The Gold Star Bridge, carrying I-95 over the Thames River in New London, is the largest structure in the State of Connecticut. It has more than 1,000,000 sq. ft. of deck area and a span length of 6,000 ft.

This year’s WTS Scholarship recipient was Enisa Alanaj from Central Connecticut State University. Enisa is a junior at CCSU studying civil engineering with a focus on transportation.

The event closed with recognition of those individuals that have participated in the WTS Mentor Program 2009/10 season. Those individuals were, mentors Jim Ford, BETA Group; Carla Tillery, FHI; and Carrie Rocha, Keville Enterprises; apprentices Crystal Engram, GBT; Lia Huang, CRCOG; and Crystal Bertrand, CTDOT.

The Annual Awards Dinner was well attended by WTS members, peer professionals, municipal and DOT representatives, and family members in support of our award winners.

*Contributed by Shawna Barkley*

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Member Attended the ITE Transportation Symposium

The 6th Annual ITE Transportation Student Research Symposium was held on April 7th, 2010. For the first time, the event was held at the University of Connecticut. WTS was among the few proud sponsors of the event whose purpose was to provide an opportunity to several New England schools presenting their technical findings in the vastly growing field of transportation engineering. During the event, representatives from WTS had an opportunity to meet and talk with future engineers from six participating schools, as well as participate in the 6 sessions, where papers and thesis findings were presented. In total, there were 22 presentations. In addition to technical presentations, there was also time for a friendly game of traffic bowl. The participating schools: UConn, UMass-Amherst, NYU-Polytechnic, and NJIT showed off their traffic knowledge. Attendees enjoyed watching the professionals and students participate in the game. The event was attended by approximately 90 people, approximately half were students.

Finally, the lunch and dinner program included two keynote speakers: Commissioner Joseph Marie, who spoke at lunch about Connecticut transportation issues, and Professor Nick Lownes, who discussed the future of ITE at the dinner program.

True Connecticut fans’ thoughts were on the pep rally organized for the UCONN women’s basketball team, returning, victorious, that evening from their final NCAA game.

*Contributed by Patrycia Pablo*
Brooke Hoberman serves as Employer Services Coordinator for Rideworks in New Haven, Connecticut and as the Treasurer for WTS Connecticut Valley Chapter. She began her career at Rideworks in 1984 as the Office Manager and was promoted to her current position in 1990 to promote business development. Rideworks is a non-profit rideshare company funded by CTDOT that promotes alternative paths of transportation.

Brooke is a Connecticut transplant. Like many, she studied and graduated from a Connecticut school of higher education and decided to stay. She holds a degree in secondary education from the University of Bridgeport. After a stint in student teaching in Norwalk, she found many dislikes with the position, one being the students were much taller than her, and opted out of the teaching field.

Brooke’s career with Rideworks introduced her to WTS. She joined the Connecticut Chapter of WTS with Jean Stimolo, also of Rideworks. She learned about WTS from the Chapter’s founder during it’s early days. Brooke later became treasurer of the Chapter and still holds that position today.

When asked what changes she has seen in WTS since its inception Brooke responded, “the early years had a lot of CTDOT and other public transportation agency members. Today the organization is primarily made up of private companies and some public agency representatives. Also in the early years, the organization was all women; not by policy, ‘just because.’” Brooke feels the organization is a great avenue for networking, a real opportunity for individuals from the private and public sectors to share ideas. She also believes the mix of men and women is important for many reasons.

Brooke resides on Connecticut’s shoreline. When asked where she’s from, she replies “from New York, but my heart is in Connecticut.”

For more information about ridesharing opportunities, CT telecommuting programs, and federal pre-tax programs for commuters, contact Brooke at bhoberman@rideworks.com

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**WTS Welcomes our New Member**

Jessica Tinney of HAKS

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**Membership Connections —**

Please join us for our Second Annual Membership Connections Program to be held on Thursday, May 6, from 4-6 PM. The event will take place at the office of Michael Baker, 500 Enterprise Drive, Suite 2B, Rocky Hill, CT.

Last year, this program allowed people who were not familiar with WTS to come to an informal gathering and ask questions and talk to current members.

Existing members are encouraged to invite co-workers, friends and community members to attend. This event welcomes prospective members and introduces folks to the roles, missions and benefits of being part of WTS. The program will have a series of stations including Professional Development, Events, Membership, Educational Speaker, Forums, and Scholarship. The event promises an opportunity to network and have some fun! And, the first 10 WTS members to arrive with a non-member will receive a special gift from WTS!
WTS RI Luncheon Features Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor Plan

WTS Rhode Island Chapter held a luncheon on Thursday, February 25th featuring a presentation on “Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor Master Plan.” Ms. Amrita Hill, Principal Officer with Amtrak’s Infrastructure Planning, Strategic Partnerships & Business Development Division, and Mr. Thomas Moritz, Amtrak Senior Director of Commuter Partnerships, presented on the collaborative master planning effort involving 11 states, the District of Columbia, 10 commuter rail agencies, four freight carriers, and numerous federal agencies. The Northeast Corridor (NEC) covers 870 miles from Virginia to Maine, including 47 miles in Connecticut. The NEC provides 153 trains, daily, and it serves 14 million riders annually.

Ms. Hill provided attendees with a preview of the final master plan and recommendations for the corridor. Mr. Moritz discussed ongoing efforts between Amtrak and the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to initiate commuter rail services south of Providence, RI.

The master plan will address the immediate needs of the NEC, as well as its future. With a backlog of over $5 billion in infrastructure projects just to bring the NEC into good repair, the NEC’s current reliability, capacity, and future growth are at risk.

Thirty new rail services are envisioned, including the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Line in Connecticut and Massachusetts, expansion of the Danbury Line, and added services on the Waterbury Branch Line.

By 2030, the NEC is projected to provide 3,600 daily trains and serve over 415 million riders annually. Investments will include an estimated $2.5 billion for High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) Program, with $1.56 billion for Amtrak in fiscal year 2010.

A Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) will be conducted for the entire NEC. Projects with independent utility will be studied individually, including the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel in Maryland and the Portal Bridge in New Jersey. Laurel Stegina attended the RI Luncheon on behalf of CT Valley Chapter. — Contributed by Laurel Stegina

June is National Safety Month

Thank You

To all our WTS Members who have helped to put this Newsletter together and have volunteered their time to ensure that all our programs and events have been a success. Thank You ~ We couldn’t do it without your support! If you would like to submit a news article for a future newsletter or have any ideas for future articles that would be helpful or of interest to your fellow members or even something for fun. Please email to khanh.tran@stvinc.com
WTS Mentor Program
Apprentice Testimonial

The program was a right on time experience for me both professionally and personally. The WTS program allowed me to be flexible when scheduling meetings with my mentor and the topics were whatever was going on in my professional life, all while still working within the parameters of a well designed structure. My mentor was genuinely interested, provided guidance and was devoted to the mission at hand. Although I am a transportation professional, I only like to drive when absolutely necessary; so the fact that the group discussions were a bit of a distance, was not a particularly attractive feature of the program. However, the guest speakers and group discussions were so engaging that after the initial gathering, I gave less and less thought to the drive and actually began to look forward to the meetings more and more. I would not have doubt encourage others to participate!

by Crystal Engram, HR Manager, Greater Bridgeport Transit

To learn more about the WTS Mentorship Program please contact Shawna Bartkus at sbartkus@dewberry.com.

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WTS CT VALLEY
EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

President
Laurel Stegina
Principal Planner
Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.
lstegina@fitzplnn.com

Vice President
Theresa Albaneese
Natural Resources Group Manager
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
talbaneese@gfnct.com

Secretary
Nancy Pugliese Rolfe
Senior Civil Engineer
AECOM
nancy ролф@aecom.com

Treasurer
Brooke Hoberman
Employer Services Coordinator
Rideworks of Greater New Haven
bhoberman@rideworks.com

Immediate Past President
Theresa Albaneese
Natural Resources Group Manager
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
talbaneese@gfnct.com

Director-at-Large
Lori Long
Senior Office Engineer
Pasquale Brinkerhoff
llong@pbworld.com

WTS CT VALLEY COMMITTEES

COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE
Chairperson
Jessica Perutti
Office Manager/Marketing Assistant
HAKS Engineers, P.C.
jperutti@haks.net

Members
Jessica Timney
HAKS Engineers, P.C.

EVENT COMMITTEE
Chairperson
Patrycja Padlo
Transportation Analyst II
Wilbur Smith Associates
ppadlo@wilbursmith.com

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE
Chairperson
Sojka Earnshaw
President
VN Engineers
snirsh@vnengineers.com

Members
Kaethe Podgorski
VN Engineers

MENTORSHIP COMMITTEE
Chairperson
Shawna Bartkus
Marketing Manager
Dewberry
sbartkus@dewberry.com

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE
Chairperson
Kim Tran
STV Incorporated
khanh.tran@stvinc.com

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE
Chairpersons
Lauren DiGiovanni
Civil Associate
Michael Baker
LDiGiovanni@mbakercorp.com

Members
Shivani Mahajan
Transportation Engineer
URS Corporation
Shivani.Mahajan@URSCorp.com

WTS’ Board of Directors is comprised of its Executive Officers and Committee Chairpersons.

About our Organization

The Women’s Transportation Seminar was founded in 1977 and since then has grown to over 4,500 members. WTS has helped bridge opportunities and pave the way for women striving to seek career advancement in transportation. The CT Valley Chapter is one of 45 WTS chapters spread out across the globe. The organization, which consists of both male and female members, has gained recognition through its determined and devoted professional members.

We are on the Web!
See us at:
www.wtsinternational.org

Interested in becoming more active in WTS? We are looking for professionals with new ideas and energy! Volunteer on one of our Committees by contacting our Committee Chairs!