President’s Message

It is truly hard to believe we are already halfway through 2019 and into the beautiful season of SUMMER!

It has been quite a busy year already for our Chapter, with our Annual Awards Banquet, Leadership Program sessions, and the Tour of Consumer Reports Test Track Facility happening in the past few months.

We are in full swing with planning the Summer Social, which will be held on Thursday, August 15, 2019 at Crystal Ridge Winery in South Glastonbury. Come network and discuss the latest happenings in the industry while some wine and a breathtaking view of Hartford. And, of course, our signature event, the Transportation Mini-Series will be held on Thursday, October 3, 2019 at the Sheraton Rocky Hill. The call for papers is open now!

Our next Leadership Session on Decision Making will be held on Tuesday, August 27th at CTDOT.

And we are always looking for new members! If you’re already a member, consider inviting a coworker or colleague to join. If you’re interested in joining or you’ve let your membership lapse and would like to rejoin, please contact me at btorres@fhiplan.com

I look forward to working with our members and colleagues this year to continue furthering the WTS mission to “attract, sustain, connect and advance women’s careers to strengthen the transportation industry.”

WTS Connecticut Chapter’s Vision

To offer a WTS chapter that provides exceptional benefits to its members in the areas of professional development, career support, mentorship, and student outreach; offers leadership, educational, and networking opportunities; advances women in the transportation industry; and strives to function in an environmentally sustainable manner, with integrity and a commitment to diversity.

Visit us at: www.wtsinternational.org/connecticut/
**Student Outreach: Groton-New London Airport**

On May 4, the WTS CT Student Outreach Committee co-chairs, Nancy Rolfe and Brenda Zhou accompanied more than 20 Girl Scouts for a tour of the Groton-New London Airport.

The group visited the 1109th TASMG Army National Guard helicopter repair facility, the air traffic control tower, and the Mystic Jet Center. The girls got to climb into the control tower and learn about what is involved to keep the airport flow running smoothly.

Airport ARFF (Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting) and Operations offered a close look at their rescue truck and tools, and demonstrated a water spray operation. The girls also learned about drone flight technology and applications.

At the conclusion of the tour, the Girl Scouts reviewed quiz questions on information presented to them during the tour and earned a Transportation patch.

This event provided insight to the girls on the importance and complexity of a regional airport and to make them aware of career opportunities in the aviation industry.

Our sincere gratitude goes to Catherine L. Young, the airport business developer/manager at the Connecticut Airport Authority.

**Women on the Move**

Halliday, Carla Tillery has been named Chief Operating officer for FHI! Congratulations to Carla in this new, well-deserved role.

After 24 years of service at Fitzgerald &

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**Corporate Sponsor Highlight**

A proud supporter of WTS CT

**WTS/COMTO Partner up for Panel**

On Wednesday, June 19 WTS CT and the CT Chapter of COMTO teamed up to host a career forum at the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT). "How We Got Here: Career Paths in the Transportation Industry," featured an impressive panel of transportation professionals who shared their unique experiences and perspectives on how they got to where they are today.

Panelists included CTDOT Commissioner Joe Giulietti; Jennifer Little-Greer from the Minority Construction Council; Rohan Freeman, owner of Freeman Companies and Kelly Funkhouser of Consumer Reports.

The session was moderated by the CTDOT's Randall Davis, who kept the panel conversation active and engaging.

WTS CT would like to thank everyone who participated in this event, including CT COMTO Chapter President Carl Jackson for his enthusiasm for partnering with our chapter. We look forward to future partnering opportunities with COMTO!

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**Are you interested in getting more involved with WTS CT Chapter?**

Serving on an industry board such as WTS offers many benefits for you and your firm or agency including:

- Exposure to new contacts
- Relationship building
- Management and leadership skills enhancement
- Professional and personal development

Unsure and want to test the waters or just learn a more about WTS CT before committing?

Contact WTS CT President Bonnie Damato-Torres at btorres@fhiplan.com for more information.
2019 WTS Awards Dinner

The Annual Awards Dinner was held at Saint Clements Castle on Thursday, April 25, 2019. Keynote speaker and WTS CT 2018 Honorary Member Jennifer Little-Greer of the Minority Construction Council, kicked things off with a great speech. She was followed by guest speaker CTDOT Commissioner Joseph Giulietti. WTS CT was honored to welcome these two distinguished members of the transportation industry to this event. Both spoke about the hard work the WTS Connecticut chapter does to support women in the transportation industry and praised the chapter's many accomplishments.

Awards for the Mentorship Program, Leadership Program, and Scholarships were presented to deserving recipients. It was great to see so many WTS CT members as well as college students being acknowledged for their successes and for advancing themselves and increasing their knowledge and skillsets.

The following awards were then presented: Innovative Project of the Year Award, I-84 Multimodal Transit Station, TranSystems and CTDOT; Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award, Shari Pratt, CTDOT; Employer of the Year Award, HNTB; and Member of the Year Award, Alicia Leite, CTDOT.

The evening ended with a fantastic speech from Woman of the Year Award recipient, Sofia Nishiberg, VN Engineers. Congratulations to all of these deserving award winners. Thank you for supporting WTS, for being leaders and role models, and for being champions for women in this industry.

Corporate Sponsor Highlight
Meet the Newsletter Committee

You may have noticed that the WTS newsletter got a new look this spring. Meet the new newsletter co-chairs responsible for it!

Meghan Bard is a Senior Planner with Fitzgerald & Halliday, where she works in the Public Involvement service line. As a former journalist and lawyer, Meghan brings a unique perspective to public outreach and community planning. She has a background in both public and private real estate development and transportation in the Hartford area, and brings extensive writing, editing, social media and communications experience to FHFs projects. Meghan attended UConn as an undergrad and has a Master’s in journalism and a J.D., both from Northeastern University in Boston.

Meghan strongly believes in the WTS mission of supporting women in the male-dominated transportation industry, and in 2019 was recruited by Bonnie Torres to take over editing of the WTS newsletter. She is responsible for the newsletter’s new look, and is always looking for new ideas to highlight the amazing work of the WTS members.

In her spare time, you can find Meghan on the porch of her antique home in Rockville, or writing, talking and tweeting about her beloved UConn Huskies for A Dime Back.

Meghan can be reached at mbard@fhplan.com

Sonia Zarate is an Engineer I in the highway/civil department at HNTB in Rocky Hill. With two years of full-time experience in the design and plan development of roadways, her responsibilities include assisting with preliminary and final design, detailing and checking calculations and drawings, and quantities and cost estimating. During her time at HNTB, she has worked on several rehabilitation projects including projects located in Connecticut, Maine, Georgia, and New Jersey. As an undergrad at WPI, she interned with the Panama Canal Authority at the MicaFlors Water Treatment Plant where she evaluated the changes in potable water quality as a result of the Panama Canal Expansion project.

Sonia joined the WTS Connecticut Chapter in April 2018. She was excited to join because of the WTS mission and commitment to helping women advance in the transportation industry. As a recent graduate, Sonia believes that joining WTS was an important first step to help guide her towards a successful career and in the future, hopes to return the favor by helping other women early in their career. Wanting to be more involved with WTS, Sonia joined the Newsletter Committee as a co-chair. As a co-chair, Sonia has gotten the opportunity to become closer to the women who are the driving force behind the WTS CT.

Sonia can be reached at sazarate@hntb.com

WTS International Conference 2019

WTS International came together in Boston, Mass., from May 14 to May 17 of this year at the Westin Copley with the goal of exchanging ideas and learning about the latest developments in the transportation industry. More than 700 corporate and governmental transportation leaders worldwide came together to discuss emerging technologies, demographic shifts, climate change adaptation, and other variables disrupting the transportation space.

Katty Kay, Anchor from BBC World News America was the keynote speaker. Her speech focused on confidence and was based on research for the book she co-wrote with Claire Shipman, Confidence Code: The newsletter consulted with neuroscientists and psychologists to discover why men are more confident than women, and what women can do about it. The duo also wrote Confidence Code for Girls, which offers the same information to younger girls.

Susan VanBenschoten, WTS CT Advisory Council Member, headed up the Woman Business Owners Roundtable. This was an all-day session where woman business owners in the transportation industry shared successful experiences and learn from others about starting and running a business.

The WTS CT Chapter was awarded the Circle of Excellence Silver Award for 2019. WTS CT was represented by Bonnie Damato-Torres, Becca Hall, Lisa Slonus, Anna Barry, Susan VanBenschoten, Lori Long, Jennifer Carrier, Nancy Rolfe, Lauren DiGiovanni, Shwani M., Kelly Funkhouser, Carla Tillery and Sharat Kalluri.
Consumer Reports Test Track Visit

On June 27, 25 people from WTS CT and CT ITE visited the Consumer Reports test track in Colchester, Conn. The site was previously the Connecticut Dragway, and in late 1980s Consumer Reports opened their facility and started testing vehicles.

Tests conducted at the site include braking, emergency handling, road noise, ride, and wet braking. CTDOT helps monitor the coefficient of friction on the tracks. Car, tires, and child seats are all tested out of the Test Center in Colchester.

To test ice braking Consumer Reports heads over to the Northford Ice Pavilion and drives at 10mph. They don’t hit the boards!

Visitors were able to experience the handling track, automatic braking, and tire testing, avoidance maneuver with and without stability control.

Consumer Reports purchases the test cars themselves using secret shoppers; they don’t use press or free cars given to them by the manufacturers. Visitors also learned about their goal for autonomous vehicles: A safe measured advancement of technology so we can move forward without people getting hurt.
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