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TRANSLINE is a Greater Chicago Chapter Publication and is produced to share news and views with our members.

Please email story ideas, employment opportunities and recent promotion information to Christine Baker at cbaker@cbaker.net.

For more information on WTS, visit www.wtsinternational.org.

Action keeps the industry firing on all cylinders

Letter from the President

Daily news about doomsday scenarios, the expansion of casinos to provide critical transportation funding and never-ending congestion woes keep our community aware of this complex situation and on the edge of our seats, waiting to see what will happen next. This type of coverage emphasizes the significance of our industry and that we, as transportation professionals, must work together to make things happen and not just wait and see.



Do you ever ask yourself: "How can I get involved at some level and actually make a difference?" Well, WTS members are finding all sorts of ways to make a difference in the industry.

At our last program with CTA President **Ron Huberman**, one of our members asked, "How, and where, can we send a letter to support the transit reform bill?" He replied, "It's simple. There's a form letter on the CTA website and a process that will walk you through the submission. It will even make sure that your specific legislators are informed." However, Mr. Huberman strongly recommended picking up the phone and calling your legislator. The impact will be even greater.

If you have attended an event, bought a raffle ticket or urged your company to belong to the WTS sponsor program, then you have made a difference in our scholarship program. Your involvement has allowed our organization to nearly double all three scholarship awards this year. More importantly, you've helped pave the way for future generations of transportation professionals.

As you renew your membership and encourage others around you to become members, the difference you are making is manifold. Our chapter is one of the strongest in the nation and continues to provide networking, relationship building and education on a monthly basis to a diverse alliance of your peers, industry veterans and potential clients. Few industry organizations, if any, can match these benefits.

Opportunity doesn't always knock. Sometimes you have to open the door yourself. In the spirit of opening your own door, I encourage you to get involved with WTS -- an organization that welcomes you and provides an open, sociable environment to work on any and all desired skill sets and interests that will keep your career track moving forward. Network within the organization and you're sure to hear stories from members that attest to the power of WTS and the invigorating catalyst it has been in their career development.

Do something for yourself. Carve out some time in your busy schedule to refocus your career path or explore where it can go. Knock! Persevere! The rewards are far greater than you can imagine. I speak from experience.

CTA President Ron Huberman discusses transit future

CTA President **Ron Huberman** joined WTS for a luncheon program on November 27 to discuss the current transit funding crisis and his vision for the future of the CTA.



CTA President Ron Huberman addresses the crowd of more than 100 at a recent WTS program.

Mr. Huberman's discussion occurred in the midst of a critical period for transit in Illinois, as lawmakers struggle to approve a budget that will provide the desperately needed funds required for uninterrupted service and minimal fare increases. As anticipated, Mr.

Huberman addressed the funding issues, but not until after he acknowledged his admiration for WTS, spoke of women who have preceded him and inspired him during his career and recognized current CTA staff, including several WTS members, whom he considers to be valuable contributors to his efforts at the agency.

He also noted some of the service improvements that have already been implemented during his first year as CTA President, including the elimination of slow zones along the Red and Blue Lines, the completion of several Brown Line sta-

tion renovations ahead of schedule and the improved cleanliness along the system.

Mr. Huberman's comments regarding the funding crisis took a three-part approach. He spoke first of the areas within the organization for which funding is needed, including operations, employee benefits, namely healthcare and pensions, and capital improvements. He then prefaced a summary of possible solutions with a brief history of transit funding, informing the audience of more than 100 guests that the last change to the funding formula was in 1983 with a calculation that has long since fallen below the rate of inflation.

Finally, Mr. Huberman spoke of the "CTA of the future," including the use of the Civic Consulting Alliance, a not-for-profit consulting firm working to improve public service projects in the City of Chicago, providing a strategic plan to modernize the CTA and introducing commercial opportunities for local disadvantaged businesses in CTA stations and platforms.



Pace Deputy Executive Director, Revenue Services and Chicago Chapter Advisory Board member, Melinda Metzger, introduces Ron Huberman.

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, January 23 - IDOT Secretary Milt Sees and Director of Highways Christine Reed

IDOT Secretary **Milt Sees** and newly appointed Director of Highways **Christine Reed** will join WTS for a luncheon program on Wednesday, January 23. Ms. Reed is the first woman ever appointed IDOT Director of Highways. This program will also serve as our annual business meeting. Watch your e-mail for more information on this program coming soon.

Sunday, January 13 - WTS International TRB Reception

WTS International will host a reception at the TRB Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 13 from 6:30-8:30 pm at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC. More information will be sent via e-mail or can be found at www.wtsinternational.org.

Long-awaited Tollway extension open for business

Tollway Executive Director Brian McPartlin discusses newest component of Tollway's \$6.3 billion Congestion-Relief Program

Illinois Tollway Executive Director **Brian McPartlin** joined WTS to discuss the Tollway's Congestion-Relief Program and the opening of the I-355 extension at a luncheon program on November 5.

Mr. McPartlin shared his excitement over the Tollway's success in the completion of the new 12.5 mile, three lane extension of the North-South Tollway with more than 80 WTS members and guests at Maggiano's in Oak Brook.



Tollway Executive Director Brian McPartlin discusses the opening of the I-355 extension.

The new roadway, known as the Veteran's Memorial Tollway, was completed ahead of schedule. It extends from I-55 south through DuPage, southern Cook and Will counties to I-80 and serves one of the fastest growing regions in the country. It is

expected to decrease travel times by nearly 20 percent and positively impact economic growth in the area.

The extension is part of the Tollway's \$6.3 billion Congestion-Relief Program - *Open Roads for a Faster Future*, which seeks to reduce congestion and improve service for Tollway customers. In addition to the I-355 extension, the Program includes non-stop, system-wide Open Road Tolling and the widening of existing roadways.

Mr. McPartlin also acknowledged several female Tollway employees, many of whom were in the audience, for their leadership within the organization.

WTS Board hosts strategic planning session

On September 22, the WTS Greater Chicago Chapter Board held a strategic planning session. Chapter officers, committee chairs and interested members joined together to discuss what we want to accomplish within our chapter and the best ways to meet the following goals, which were developed as part of WTS International's recent strategic planning process:

- Expand the opportunities for women in the transportation industry through professional development, mentoring and strategic positioning for women.
- Provide leadership in the global transportation community.
- Become a leading source and authority throughout the transportation industry.

With the organization's strengths identified, members' expectations defined and new methods that may enhance the effectiveness of chapter explored, this session created a framework that will be further developed to achieve our goals.



Recognitions Chair Michelle Link participates in a brainstorming session.



Cathy Benjamin-Ostrander and Lillian Yan review comments collected during a group exercise.

WTS introduces new mentoring program, Maps & Legends

WTS held the first meeting of its new Maps & Legends mentoring program on October 22.

Seven mentor/protégé pairs, representing both the public and private sectors, began



their six month journey with a wel-

come reception followed by a facilitated program kick-off. Program facilitators **Betsy Sobiech** and **Beth Ruske** of ClearSpace, LLC introduced participants and presented an outline of the program. Everyone then participated in a matching exercise to determine the mentor/protégé partners. Once matched, they began the process of goal setting.

Each pair has committed to regular meetings on their own schedules dur-

ing the next six months. The program includes two additional facilitated events, with the next group meeting planned in January. WTS Mentoring Chair, **Stacey Meekins**, coordinated the program.

Mentor/protégé pairs include:

Jessica Vargas-Astaiza & Joan Berry

Melanie Williams & Lynnette Ciavarella

Tamara Johnson & John LaPlante

Chris Maloney & Amar Rajpurkar

Audrey Wennick & Janet Wackrow

Lisa Hoekenga & Deb Zroka

Roxann Belle & George Vukelich

WTSS Update

WTS recently completed the application process for our 2008 scholarship awards. A special thanks goes to our scholarship judges, **Noreen Ellis, Cindy Fish, Pete Meshka, Barb Sloan** and **Danielle Stewart**, who evaluated this year's outstanding scholarship applications.

Each year, the Greater Chicago Chapter presents two undergraduate scholarships and one graduate scholarship to young women who are pursuing careers in the transportation industry.

With education costs skyrocketing across the country, WTS recently voted to increase its scholarship award amounts to \$4,000 for the Helene M. Overly Memorial graduate scholarship and \$2,000 for both undergraduate scholarships, the Sharon D. Banks Memorial Scholarship and the Louise Moritz Molitoris Leadership Scholarship, to provide greater financial assistance to students.

In addition, WTS has introduced the new Ann Koby Legacy Scholarship for Graduates. While not awarded locally, the Greater Chicago Chapter will forward one nomination for consideration for the Ann Koby Legacy Scholarship at the National level.

Local scholarships will be awarded at our annual scholarship luncheon, tentatively scheduled for February 2008.

WTS Membership News

Our Membership 300 campaign is in full swing, but we need your help to make it a success.

WTS International recently approved a 10 percent dues increase, which will go into effect on January 31, 2008. This increase will not affect members with December 31 expiration dates **who renew prior to January 31**. WTS Greater Chicago is providing an additional incentive to members who renew their membership early. All early renewals will be entered into our renewal raffle drawing. Several raffle winners will be selected at our January 23 luncheon program.

We've also launched our membership incentive program, "Be a Member, Bring a Member," in conjunction with our Membership 300 campaign. Share the advantages of a WTS membership with your friends and colleagues and you'll be rewarded. Recruit five members and attend any WTS program for free. Recruit 10 members and you will receive FREE registration to the WTS Annual Conference, a \$550 value!

If you have any questions about WTS membership, please contact Membership Chair **Vida Morkunas** at morkunasv@rtachicago.org.

WTS Member News

The WTS Baby Boom Continues!

WTS member **Alisa Tilson** and husband Dave welcomed daughter Samantha Ann (pictured right) on August 15. Congratulations Alisa and Dave!



Members on the Move

Congratulations to the following members on the move...

Beth McCluskey recently joined Metra as the Section Chief of Program Development.

Stacey Meekins, WTS Mentoring Chair, recently joined T.Y. Lin International as a Transportation Planner.

Angela Moore Dluger has been promoted to General Manager of the CTA's Control Center.

WTS Board of Directors

Officers:

President: *Maggie Walsh*
Vice President: *Robin Martel*
Secretary/Website:
Melissa Thomson
Treasurer: *Ann Farley*
Past President: *Lisa Maurath*

Committee Chairs:

Communications: *Tracy Morse*
Diversity: *Charlene Wang*
Membership: *Vida Morkunas*
Newsletter: *Christine Baker*
Professional Development:
Vacant
Programs: *Vacant*
Recognitions:
Christine Baker & Michelle Link
Scholarship: *Jennifer Drake*

Fall programs

Our recent programs in review...

Women in Freight

Two women who have achieved prominence in the freight rail industry joined WTS at our September 26 luncheon program, entitled "Women in Freight." BNSF Railway Director of Suburban Services **Patricia Casler** and Union Pacific Railroad Senior Business Director—Food & Refrigerated Marketing **Lori Loschen** discussed their experiences as women in the freight rail industry and the paths that led them to their current positions with two of the nation's largest railroads.

The Balancing Act - How Families are Balancing Career, Children, Home and Personal Time in Our Busy World

WTS hosted **Tamara O'Shaughnessy**, editor of "Chicago Parent" magazine, at our October 24 Professional Development program. Ms. O'Shaughnessy spoke to a breakfast gathering of WTS members and friends about how "Chicago Parent" works with parents and families in our area who must contend with the challenges of meeting the demands of both families and careers. Her interactive presentation addressed issues including balancing schedules, alternative work arrangements, outside resources and non-traditional parental roles.

Board Announcements

WTS represented at IDOT career day

WTS was among dozens of companies and organizations that attended the Illinois Department of Transportation's first ever Career Day in Springfield on September 20. The event introduced Springfield and Decatur area students to the many rewarding opportunities available in the transportation industry. IDOT, the Federal Highway Administration and a variety of other state agencies and private companies organized the event. Greater Chicago Chapter President **Maggie Walsh** and HDR's **Paula Pionton** (both pictured at right) represented WTS. The WTS booth proved to be one of the most popular booths at Career Day. Budding engineers, anxious to demonstrate their engineering skills, were challenged to build a bridge strong enough to support an apple using a sheet of paper balanced across two piers.



WTS London member Nicola van Domburg visits WTS Chicago

The WTS Greater Chicago Chapter Board was greeted by a special international guest at its October meeting. WTS London Board member **Nicola van Domburg** joined us during a visit to Chicago. Nicola, pictured at right with Board members **Maggie Walsh**, **Christine Baker** and **Robin Martel**, brought information about the great things happening in the London Chapter and presented Chicago Board Members with copies of her chapter's publications, including "Women on Board," a guide that is focused on getting more women on the boards of corporate, public and community organizations, the WTS London Business Plan 2006/08, an events calendar and a booklet that presents the biographies of the London chapter's Board Members. Nicola's visit was a pleasant and welcome reminder of the international reach that WTS has achieved.



Thank You!

A special thank you to outgoing WTS Greater Chicago Chapter Board members **Ann Farley**, **Tracy Morse** and **Charlene Wang** for their hard work and dedication to WTS over the years. We wish you all the best!

2007 Advisory Board

Rosemarie Andolino
City of Chicago OMP

Robin Black
CDM

Mary Carveth
Pace Chicago Operations

Toulla Constantinou
CEMUSA, Inc.

Natalie Cornell
Consultant

Nuria Fernandez
Chicago Department of Aviation

Rep. Julie Hamos
Illinois Representative, 18th District

John LaPlante
T.Y. Lin

Melinda Metzger
Pace

Paul Nowicki
BNSF

Christine Reed
IDOT

Danielle Stewart
IDOT

Paula Thibeault
Consultant

Chapter Sponsors

We would like to thank our corporate sponsors for becoming part of a growing, vibrant organization that is influencing transportation in Chicago and around the country.

Champions

BNSF
CTE



Guardians

Collins Engineers
DMJM
PB
URS



Advocates

CDM
Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd.
Jacobs Edwards and Kelcey
HACIA
Harry O. Hefter Associates, Inc.
HDR
SEC Group, Inc.
Wight & Co.



Patrons

Ardmore Associates
Images, Inc.
Cotter Consulting, Inc.



The continued success of WTS depends on you. Our sponsor list is posted on the website at www.wtsinternational.org. The money raised with this program supports our scholarship fund, operations of the organization and our mission to advance women in transportation. To become a sponsor, contact WTS Vice President **Robin Martel** at 312.261.5725 or RMartel@wightco.com.

Welcome New Members!

Riccardo Amodei
STV

Carol Callanan-Uhl

Corina Farez
Wang Engineering

Dan Johnson-Weinberger
More Riders/Progressive Public
Affairs

Mary Jo Kuenster
Teng & Associates

Christine Maloney
IDOT

Sandra Walter Meyer

Janice Reid
HDR

Karyn Robles
City of Naperville

Justin Samaniego
Titan Worldwide

Tammy Wierciak
West Central Municipal Conference

Erika Witzke
Wilbur Smith Associates

Alexandra Yeung
CDM

If you know anyone who might be interested in becoming a WTS member, please visit www.wtsinternational.org or contact WTS Membership Chair **Vida Morkunas** at morkunasv@rtachicago.org.

Around the Industry

Future Cities Competition looking for volunteers

The 16th annual Future Cities Competition is in progress. Chicago area middle school students work in teams under the guidance of a teacher and a volunteer mentor, typically an engineer or architect, to design and build a city of tomorrow. The students use SimCity software to learn more about their cities and then create a physical, scaled model of their city. The students are also required to write an essay explaining more about their city.

This year, the focus is on safety for the country's vast network of utilities, transportation, structures and communications systems. The regional competition will be held at the University of Illinois at Chicago on January 26. Students from schools across Chicagoland will present their model cities to the judges, which includes creating a display board and delivering a short presentation. Winners at the local level gain the opportunity compete at the National Future Cities Competition in Washington, D.C.

This competition is a fantastic opportunity for students to learn more about the transportation industry and for transportation professionals to share that knowledge and enthusiasm with the next generation. As a volunteer mentor or judge, you will be amazed at the extent to which these students research and learn about transportation during the course of the program. Help encourage our young people to pursue careers in the transportation industry by volunteering for the program. Volunteers are needed to help sponsor, judge and mentor the program. For more information or to receive information about signing up for the 2008-2009 competition, contact Don Wittmer at 312-930-9119 or dwittmer@hntb.com or visit www.futurecity.org.

IDOT to host 2008 Today's Challenge Tomorrow's Reward DBE Conference

The Illinois Department of Transportation will hold its 2008 DBE conference, "Today's Challenge, Tomorrow's Reward," on February 19-20 at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield. The conference will include workshops to help DBE firms achieve success by building relationships with IDOT and other agencies and networking with prime contractors and consultants. It will also provide DBE program updates. More information is available at IDOT's website, www.dot.il.gov.

News Bits

Veterans Memorial Tollway dedicated on Veteran's Day

The Illinois Tollway dedicated the new I-355 extension, known as the Veterans Memorial Tollway, at a special ceremony on Veteran's Day, November 11. The Veterans Memorial Tollway extends I-355 south from I-55 through DuPage, Southern Cook and Will counties to I-80 and serves several fast-growing suburban communities. The dedication included a charity 5K run/walk/roll, a 20 mile bike ride and several community festivals. Many WTS Greater Chicago Chapter members and friends contributed to this project, which was part of the Tollway's Congestion-Relief Plan – Open Roads for a Faster Future.

Christine Reed named first female IDOT Director of Highways

The Illinois Department of Transportation recently named **Christine Reed** Director of Highways, making her the first woman in state history to hold this position. Prior to her appointment, Ms. Reed served as IDOT Deputy Director, Region 4 Engineer. She is also the newest member of the WTS Advisory Board.

WTS wishes you and your family a happy and healthy holiday season! We look forward to seeing you in 2008!