



Advancing women  
Advancing transportation  
Spring 2021  
Newsletter

**PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

Dear WTS Members and Friends,

Welcome to Spring! The change in weather is bringing a new energy to town and with it an optimism to connect with friends and coworkers we haven't seen in some time. Although we may still be virtual with our WTS activities, we have a lot of great things going on and opportunities to connect.

We recently held our 2<sup>nd</sup> virtual Scholarship and Recognition event. It was a great evening celebrating an inspiring group of people doing great things in our community and industry. This annual event is one of the highlights for the year where people can network and be introduced to WTS and the mission. I also want to

recognize that WTS International has awarded Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. the 2020-2021 WTS Recognition Award – Employer of the Year! In 2020 Stantec was recognized by WTS Minnesota; that nomination carried forward to International and will be celebrated at the annual conference later this week.

In April the Diversity and Inclusion Committee kicked off a 3-part training series on Racial Justice. The committee has worked hard over the last year to organize a training series that can benefit both members and friends of WTS on this important topic. The training extends for 3 months featuring a focused training session followed by small group discussions, in total 6 opportunities to learn and discuss. The feedback so far from attendees has been very positive!

The Transportation YOU program will soon be wrapping up another school year at Blaine High School. The final program will feature a Q&A discussion with a former TYOU graduate, Kellie Urman, who will share about her experience pursuing an education and career in transportation. The TYOU mentorship program is a great way to give back and encourage young women to seek out professions in the transportation industry. We're looking for a Co-Chair for the 2021-2022 school year and always welcome new mentors. Please email [Belick Pha](#) or [Laura Melcher](#) for more information on how you can get involved.

Finally I would like to say thank you to our Corporate and Public Agency Sponsors. Without your support and contributions we would not be able provide these opportunities to our chapter and community.

Andrea Arnoldi  
President WTS MN Chapter

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## 2021 Minnesota Transportation Conference Featured Tracks on Equity and Diversity Topics

By: Brenda Thomas of KLJ

In early March more than 1200 participants from the transportation industry joined in a three-day virtual conference to listen and learn from their peers across the state – and country. The theme “Changing World – Changing Transportation” was supported by almost 80 presentations with themes ranging from planning and design to traffic and transit – and everything in between. In the changing world of not only transportation but the day to day happenings in our state proves that the topic of equity, inclusion and diversity must be included in all phases of our work.



“Promoting, equity and diversity is a core part of ACEC/MN’s mission,” said Jonathan Curry, Co-Chair of Minnesota’s Transportation Conference. “I am proud that our planning committee was able to coordinate multiple education tracks to address equity in the built environment”.

Below are a few highlights of presentations made from our colleagues.

- ◇ “Strategies and Lessons Learned for Advancing Contracting Equity” presented on strategies and lessons learned for advancing contracting equity by utilizing small contracts to create opportunities.
- ◇ “Creating Opportunities” highlighted WSB’s Opportunity + Training Program which provides a pathway program to recruit and train people for careers in the civil engineering industry.
- ◇ A collaboration of professors from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs and MnDOT shared “How Gender Equity Can Advance Safety, Access and Mobility.”
- ◇ “How Do We Address Transportation Inequities Together?” Explored what MnDOT offices are doing to address current inequities within transportation and what they are doing to not create new inequities with our ever-changing transportation system.

All the presentations from the conference were recorded and can be viewed online. Registered members can access the [pathable URL](#) and type in their username and password. Any issues accessing your account can be directed to Katie Leibel [katie@transportationalliance.com](mailto:katie@transportationalliance.com)

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Kaitlyn Denten

WTS Minnesota's Member Spotlight is a newsletter feature to share your stories on what being a WTS member means to you. This month's story features Kaitlyn Denten, a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning Student at the University of Minnesota.

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### How did you come to join WTS?

I joined WTS after learning about it through networking!

### How have you gotten involved in the organization ?

I have gotten involved by attending webinars and other online events that WTS hosts. I am looking forward to going to in-person happy hours and networking events in the future.

### Why do you stay active?

I stay active because it is a great way to meet new people across professions and learn about the issues that are important to us. As an incoming Master of Urban and Regional Planning student, I found that WTS is a great way to start learning about the profession.



### What value has being a member had to you/your career?

As a young professional and incoming graduate student, WTS has provided the opportunity to network and start to dive into the issues surrounding transportation.

### Any words of encouragement on why someone should join?

WTS is a great way to start connecting with people across professions. It's also a great opportunity to start learning about different issues surrounding transportation.

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### A Quick Word on Membership:

The WTS Minnesota Chapter is constantly striving to deliver high-quality programs, events, and opportunities to our members and supporters. In addition to our generous sponsors, we couldn't exist as a chapter without our members. A membership in the WTS Minnesota Chapter comes with benefits including networking and professional development opportunities, reduced rates for registration for local and national WTS events, invitations to members only events, and access to transportation leaders. If you are currently a WTS member, thank you! If you aren't, please consider joining. It is free to join as a student member. Please contact us at [WTSMinnesotaMembership@gmail.com](mailto:WTSMinnesotaMembership@gmail.com) with any questions on becoming a member.

## CORPORATE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:



### MN OFFICES:

MINNEAPOLIS, DULUTH

### TRANSPORTATION SERVICES OFFERED:

Environmental, Planning, Design, ITS, Project Controls and PM/CM Services for Roads, Bridges, and Transit.



## ENGINEERING, REIMAGINED

### MN OFFICES:

ST. PAUL, BRAINERD

### TRANSPORTATION SERVICES OFFERED:

Transportation Planning, Traffic Engineering, Highway Design & Engineering, Multi-Modal Planning & Design, Bridge Design, Environmental Documentation and Field Investigation, Cultural Resources Right-of-Way Acquisition, Survey, Construction Administration

### WHY AECOM SUPPORTS WTS MN:

AECOM is focused on creating integrated transportation systems to sustain a better world in which people can live and work. AECOM believes in the transformative power a diverse and inclusive culture can have upon the transportation industry. We are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive culture that is dynamic, active and intentional to increasing individual and organization performance. We support organizations like WTS Minnesota because they are essential to advancing both the transportation industry and the women who are part of creating it!

### KLJ COMPANY DESCRIPTION:

Since the 1930s, KLJ has planned, designed, and supported infrastructure across the country such as roads, runways, pipelines, and parks. We create solutions that turn visions into reality and improve the lives of people and communities. We do this by focusing on a business model that puts the customer first, providing an exceptional experience that truly reimagines what projects can become. KLJ supports WTS and the mission of broadening opportunities for all and the active role the organization takes in promoting the advancement of women in transportation. The training and networking provided by WTS creates opportunities for our future engineers, planners, and other technical staff. These opportunities help determine the paths for our next generation of transportation professionals.



## 2021 WTS MN SCHOLARSHIP AND RECOGNITIONS CELEBRATION

WTS-MN members and friends gathered online on Thursday, April 29 to celebrate the 2021 Recognition and Scholarship winners. This was the second (and hopefully last) time the Scholarship and Recognition celebration was held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond the virtual format, this celebration contained two unique elements.

First was the announcement that Stantec was recently awarded 2020-2021 Employer of the Year from WTS-I. Stantec was nominated for this award after receiving the 2020 Employer of the Year from WTS-MN. Angie Bolstad shared some remarks on behalf of Stantec.

The other unique element was the renaming of the WTS-MN High School Scholarship as the Dan Meyers High School Scholarship. Jeanne Witzig shared heartfelt remarks about the memory of Dan Meyers who passed away in 2020 after a battle with cancer. Dan was a past WTS-MN president, advisory board member, and heavily involved in many facets of WTS-MN over the years. Jeff Rhoda of AECOM also shared remarks about Dan's legacy during his time at AECOM and presented a donation from AECOM to WTS-MN for the Dan Meyers High School Scholarship.

The presentation of the awards and scholarships was filled with joy, jokes, and personal anecdotes highlighting triumphs and tribulations. WTS-MN is proud to recognize our 2021 winners!



***2020 Chapter President  
Sara Pflaum, MnDOT***



***Employer of the Year  
Braun Intertec***



***Innovative Transportation  
Solutions—MN CAV Challenge***



***Member of the Year  
Gloria Jeff, MnDOT***



***Honorable Ray LaHood  
Brian Funk, Metro Transit***



***Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership  
Award - Amina Wolf, Metro Transit***



**Woman of the Year**  
*Charleen Zimmer, Zan Associates*



**Woman to Watch**  
*Ayantu Gemada, Metro Transit*



**WTS-MN Graduate Scholarship**  
*Oforiwaa Pee Agyei-Boakye, University of Minnesota*



**Donna Allen Undergraduate Leadership Scholarship**  
*Rachel Mummah, University of Minnesota Duluth*



**Katherine Turnbull Undergraduate Scholarship**  
*Emma Reinart, University of St. Thomas*



**Dan Meyers High School Scholarship**  
*Eliana Storkamp, South High School*

**PROGRAMS UPDATE:**

**MARCH PROGRAM RECAP—Game Show Battle Rooms!**

In March, our Programs Committee organized a virtual social event, hosted by Game Show Battle Rooms. The Game Show was a great way to connect with fellow members and show off our competitive sides! The games were hosted by dedicated Game Show Hosts who provided for comical and friendly virtual environments. Participants were split into two Zoom rooms, with two teams per room to battle it out. With names like "Survey Battles" and "Spin and Solve," the games brought plenty of laughter and friendly competition. Thank you to everyone who attended and made for a successful and fun March program!

**MAY PROGRAM—DRONE PANEL , May 18th from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM**

Join WTS as we host a panel of local specialists to discuss a variety of topics related to drone and their impact on the transportation industry. Register [here!](#)

The programs committee is working hard to bring forward an exciting panel covering the topic of drones for the month of May. Be on the lookout for more exciting topics this summer with events about electric vehicle, transportation funding, professional development, and more creative networking opportunities. We are always looking to add members to our committee. Email [wtsminnesotaprograms@gmail.com](mailto:wtsminnesotaprograms@gmail.com) with questions on how to get involved!





*CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS: We are growing as a chapter and have so many ways to get involved. See what opportunities are available [here](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PHYKBD) (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PHYKBD>)!*

**MEMBERS AND FRIENDS ON THE MOVE**

Celebrating milestones for our members and friends. Have member news to share? Send in snippets about job changes, life milestones, and other accomplishments to [Emily Bowen](#) so we can recognize our colleagues!

**Allie Futhey—**  
Welcomed Lilly Futhey to her family on March 23rd.



**KC Atkins—**  
New position as a professional engineer at SEH.

**Dr. Jessica Schoner -** New position as a Data Science Practice Lead at Toole Design Group.

**THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 SPONSORS:**

We appreciate your support! You make all our programs, scholarships, and outreach possible .

**ADVOCATE**



**SUPPORTER LEVEL:**

AET	Michael Baker International
Bolton & Menk	Stonebrook
HR Green	Terracon

**SMALL BUSINESS/DBE :**

HZ United	Pierce Pini & Associates
Isthmus Engineering	Professional Engineering Services
LV Engineering	Rani Engineering
Minnesota Transportation Alliance	Sambatek
MN Best	Zan Associates

**PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERS :**

Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Washington County  
Metro Transit