

WTSCFL Newsletter



*PRESIDENT: Snehal Ambare, PE
VICE PRESIDENT: Ivannia Bok, PMP® -
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QUARTER 1 NEWSLETTER MARCH 2022

WTS is an international organization of both women and men with the mission of advancing women and advancing transportation. Joining the WTS Central Florida (WTSCFL) Chapter is your opportunity to help turn the glass ceiling into a ladder of success for women in the transportation industry. Our programs, educational events, and networking activities are to affect positive change in our community.



Membership

Spotlights: Nicole Jeffers Appointed to Vice President at RS&H



Nicole Jeffers, who currently serves as WTS Central Florida's sponsorship chair, was recently named a Vice President with RS&H. She has been with RS&H for 19 years and is responsible for the design and management of a variety of transportation-related projects; both final design and concept plans. She has 20 years of experience in highway, toll facility, site design, maintenance-of-traffic design and more. Jeffers also serves on RS&H's Safety Leadership Team (SLT), driving progress in alignment with the firm's commitment to safety.

In addition, Jeffers was the recipient of the 2019 Innovative Transportation Solutions Award for her work leading the design to convert 148 miles of Florida's Turnpike to all electronic tolling, which included a team of more than 30 key women.

Spotlight: American Environmental Consulting (AEC) Celebrates 10-year Anniversary

Kudos to WTS Central Florida chapter member Kelly Eger-Smith for the 10-year anniversary of her firm, AEC. Although the firm launched on the heels of the "Great Recession," the firm was able to take hold and grow revenues 50% year-over-year in support of both public and private sector clients. Some of the notable projects include: the I-4 Ultimate Project, Kirkman Road (CR 435) Extension supporting Universal Orlando's new EPIC theme park, a Seminole County Brownfield site, the Holy Land new owner property assessment, and environmental assessments of numerous 1,000+ acre sites throughout Florida involving multi-use housing and commercial redevelopment.

Kelly has also given her time to WTS as the past recognitions chair and current recognitions committee member for our chapter.

Congratulations on your anniversary Kelly!



Welcome to New Members

- Christina Dos Santos, HNTB
- Stephanie Eisenberg, WSP
- Sreeja Karanam, CDM-Smith
- Ana Lleras-Cancel, KCG
- Anaïs Clémentine Magali Ponsonnet, Student
- Lourdes Rapp, BCC
- Negaar S. Minaei, CDM-Smith
- Ashley Shaw, HNTB
- Lauren Albury, Student
- Rebecca Bess, Southeastern Surveying
- Gabriela Bitar, University of Florida
- Shanquell Duncombe, Student
- Ashley Garrett, HNTB
- Dayna Griffin, Florida's Turnpike
- Keisha Turner, RK&K
- Dawn Ratican, AIM
- Emily Begovich, Tierra
- Jennifer Bleau, CDM-Smith
- Jessica Chan, Inwood
- Ankita Chaudhary, Stantec
- Fatema Hoque Farzana, HNTB
- Dajana Gibson, AIM
- Erin Johnson, JCJ Insurance
- Joy Kurtz, Railroad Consultants
- Frank O'Dea, HNTB
- Kimberly Sadowski, DRMP
- Bo Sanchez, Transystems
- Terri Settingington, LYNX
-
- Hollynn Shaffer, Volkert
- Matthew Steen, Transystems
- Lauren Torres, Orange County Public Works
- Vannesa Zetrenne, Protean Design Group



CHECK OUT RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO WTS MEMBERS

[Home - MyWTS Communities
\(wtsinternational.org\)](https://www.wtsinternational.org)

Upcoming Events

Blessing Bags

We are currently accepting donations of the listed items in the bags, and we need your help.

- Share this flyer with your coworkers and friends.
- Place a box in your office to collect donations.
- Bring the items with you to the Bagging Party on April 16, or email Ani Cancel by April 9 to arrange a pickup/drop off.
- Come with your loved ones to the Bagging Party on April 16 at GPI, located at 3051 E. Livingston St, Orlando, FL 32803 at 8:30 am.
- Ani Cancel, 201-449-6961, anicancel@yahoo.com

Learn more at [BLESSING BAGS](#).



The flyer features the WTS logo in the top right corner, which includes the text 'WTS', 'Central Florida', 'Advancing women', and 'Advancing transportation'. The main title 'PROJECT BLESSING BAGS' is prominently displayed in the center. Below the title, it states 'Now thru April 9th, WTS will be collecting items for the Homeless Blessing Bags. Our Goal is 200 bags!'. A list of items to be collected is provided, including various hygiene and personal care items. On the right side of the flyer, there is an illustration of a blue bag with the words 'BLESSING BAGS' and a globe icon.

PROJECT BLESSING BAGS

Now thru April 9th, WTS will be collecting items for the Homeless Blessing Bags.
Our Goal is 200 bags!

Items include:

- Quarter & Gallon size baggies
- Bottle of water
- Band-aids
- Hand sanitizer
- Wash cloth
- First aid kit (travel-sized)
- Personal hygiene items for women
- Granola bars
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Floss
- Soap
- Deodorant
- Shampoo/ Conditioner
- Comb
- Sunscreen
- Chapstick
- Baby wipes

Save the Date

April 28 - 2022 A Walk in Her Shoes (Dress for Success Shoe Drive)

Join us for our annual A Walk in Her Shoes event - an evening of networking, food and fun as we hear from women who have blazed trails, climbed ladders and led the way for women in transportation. Take a "walk in her shoes" as we hear the stories behind the success. This event benefits [Dress for Success Greater Orlando](#). Wear your fiercest shoes and please help by bringing a pair of gently worn shoes to donate. Not gentle on your shoes - we will have an option to donate directly to [Dress for Success](#)!

When: Apr 28, 2022 – 5:00 - 8:00pm

Where: Harry P. Leu Gardens
1920 North Forest Avenue
Orlando, FL 32803

2022 Annual Awards & Scholarship Banquet

Keep your eyes open for this year's Awards and Scholarship Banquet, set for September 29th at 6 p.m. at SeaWorld Orlando. At the banquet, we award four scholarships. Applications will be available on April 4 for the 2022 awards. Undergraduate and graduate woman who are either studying transportation in Central Florida or are from Central Florida are eligible. Stay tuned for more information! In addition, awards nominations will start in mid-April. Details to come!

Quarterly Programs - July 21 and October 26

Recent Activities

Transportation YOU Committee hosts Eweek and Girl Scout Events

Virtual E-Week Activities

February 24, 2022 – For Engineer's Week, representatives from Florida's Turnpike Enterprise and WTS sponsored a virtual STEM activity with 150 students at Seminole County's Milwee Middle School. WTS provided materials to construct two types of bridges which the students could test their structural integrity by loading the bridges with books. We hosted three virtual sessions throughout the day which included the Turnpike staff and WTS Transportation YOU Co-Chairs Lori Treverinus (**The KEITH Team**) and Karen Van den Avont (**Protean Design Group**) describing their professional journey. Maggie Van den Avont (**Avant Engineering**) and Ivonne Rios (**Kimley-Horn**) reviewed bridge types and described the bridge building activity, which was a comparison of simple span versus truss bridges.

INTRODUCTION TO BRIDGE DESIGNS

Simple Span versus a Truss



The students also has the opportunity to ask questions about engineering. A point that the teacher Ms. Urichko stressed is that Milwee Middle is a school with a high percentage of free lunch program and student often feel underprivileged and feel that they cannot succeed. Therefore, she welcomed the encouragement from us.

February 23, 2022 – WTS along with ASCE hosted the *Dream Big* Movie Night. There was a panel discussion after the movie on which Gail Woods, PE pictured in the upper right of the panel photo below. The questions included:

1. What motivated you to become an engineer?
2. What is a challenge that you have had to overcome as an engineer?
3. What motivates you at work?
4. What piece of advice would you give to people considering engineering as a career for the high school, college, and early in their career stages?
5. What do you think will be the biggest challenge for engineers in the next 25 years?
6. What do you think is the greatest thing that engineers have done for civilization?



Girl Scout Camporee and STEM Badge for Central Florida

On March 26, WTS hosted STEM activities for 87 girl scouts from 4th to 9th grade at the annual Girl Scout Camporee, Held at Boy Scout Camp La-No-Che, the activities included:

- Assembling a filter with various materials (sand, activated carbon, rocks, etc.) in which we poured dirty water through the filters to see which filter resulted in the cleanest water.
- Building two bridges (same activity as as one for E-Week above) and comparing strength.
- Constructing gliders from paper rings and straws and launching to see which went the furthest.

We also provide a STEM patch the girls could attach to their girl scout vest and a SWAPs (Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned somewhere) in the form of a traffic light they could make out of beads and string.



STEM Badge Stations



Special thanks to Karen Van den Avont ([Protean Design Group](#)), Emily Wigle ([Protean Design Group](#)), Maggie Van den Avont ([Avant Engineering](#)), Sarah Larsen ([MetroPlan Orlando](#)), Ivonne Rios ([Kimley-Horn](#)) and Robyn Hartz ([CMT](#)) who attended to oversee the STEM activities. In addition to the attendees Lori Treviranus ([The KEITH Team](#)), Gail Woods ([Transsystems](#)), Christy Lofye ([Inwood Consulting](#)) and Christine Plasencia ([Volkert](#)) were instrumental in planning this event.

Quarter 1 Program: *The Future is Now!*

WTSCFL kicked off the first in-person program two years to the date of our last one! The lunch program on February 28, titled *The Future is Now*, was moderated by MetroPlan Orlando's Lara Bouck and covered innovative topics with underlying safety benefits. The discussion included:

- Brock Aun from [HAAS Alert](#) who discussed digital in-vehicle alerting and safety benefits
- Dr. Nada Mahmoud from the [University of Central Florida](#) (and 2020 WTSCFL Graduate Scholarship Recipient) covered her research on the safety benefits of big data, technology and proactive traffic management
- Ray Maikkula from [Vertex](#) (formerly Raytheon) shared the new Optional Detection Intelligent Network (ODIN) equipment for improved electronic tolling.

In addition to clear presentations of these innovations in transportation, the panelists responded to more than a dozen questions for an extended panel discussion. For more information see [Q1 PROGRAM](#) and the [Q1 Program Photo Gallery](#).



The Future is Now! Panel (left to right) Brock Aun, Dr. Nada Mahmoud, Ray Maikkula, and Moderator Lara Bouck.

WTSCFL Celebrates Black History Month



Celebrate Black History Month

MODERATOR

- **Emmanuella Myrthil**
 - Division Diversity Director | HNTB

PANELISTS

- **Rachel Andre, PE**
 - President | GEC, Inc.
- **Lara Bouck, PE, AICP**
 - Senior Transportation Engineer | MetroPlan Orlando
- **Stacey Russell, CDP**
 - Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Facilitator | GPI, Inc.
- **Gail Woods, PE**
 - Vice President & Office Director | Transystems

EMMANUELLA MYRTHIL



RACHEL ANDRE, PE



LARA BOUCK, PE, AICP



STACEY RUSSELL, CDP



GAIL WOOD, PE

WTS Atlanta's Emmanuella Myrthil, Division Diversity Director for HNTB hosted a panel discussion with four WTSCFL members Rachel Andre, PE (GEC), Lara Bouck, PE, AICP ([MetroPlan Orlando](#)), Stacey Russell, CDP ([GPI](#)) and Gail Woods, PE ([Transsystems](#)) in celebration of Black History Month. To view the hour-long broadcast, use this URL: <https://lnkd.in/eKvQmCvx>

Chapter Leaders Host 3rd Annual Open House

What an amazing response and turn out for our WTS Central Florida 2022 Open House! Guests enjoyed networking, meeting our new [Board of Directors and Committee Chairs](#), games, and raffle prizes! Chapter President Snehal Ambare introduced the new Board of Directors before we honored the 2021 Emerging Professionals with a graduation ceremony.

Click on [OPEN HOUSE](#) to read more about the event. Also, photos are available in our [Open House Photo Gallery](#) Thanks to everyone who came out!



Emerging Professionals Kicks-off 2022

Following the graduation for the 2021 Class in February (read more at [OPEN HOUSE](#)), the 2022 Class started in March. The first step was Speed Dating on March 8 for mentors and protégés to meet and match pairs for the year.

The teams jumped right into a virtual program on March 29 by [Cyndi Gundy](#) *How to Get the Most out of Mentoring*. We appreciate Cyndi donating her time to the chapter each year - it is great information! In addition to regular one-on-one sessions with mentors, the emerging professionals will have group projects including:

- Talking to Leadership
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Communications Challenge

Welcome to the 2022 emerging professionals and congratulations to the 2021 graduates shown below.



Congratulations to 2021 Graduates pictured left to right: Catherine Felter, PE – [Kimley-Horn](#), Grace Taussig, EI – [Michael Baker International](#), Michelle Buitron, EI – [PGA](#), Ivannia Bok, PMP – [CTS Engineering](#), Maria Bolivar, EI – [WGI](#)

WTSCFL Thanks Swings for Scholarships Participants

Thanks to our participants and sponsors for the 2022 Swings for Scholarships event at TopGolf in Lake Mary. We had a beautiful sunny day with 92 registrants to golf or hang out in support of our scholarship program. The day included a buffet lunch and tournament play to hit a specific target each round. Read more about the event at [SWINGS](#) and check out event photos at [Swings Photo Gallery](#).



We could not have had the days success without our annual and event sponsors shown in the graphics below.



WTSCFL MLK Day of Service

The new year started with a day of service. Thank you to our chapter's Community Relations Committee, led by Ani Cancel from KCG, for organizing our participation in the [City of Orlando's Seedlings for Civil Rights](#) service event in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. On January 17, 2022, chapter members and families met at Eagle Nest Park in west Orlando. The annual effort was to green up the park by planting trees and mulching. In addition, the team removed litter and debris from the park, ballfields, and surrounding trails. We all enjoyed the chilly morning.

"Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve." -Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Thanks to our 2022 Annual Sponsors!

Advancing women
Advancing Transportation
In Central Florida

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Join WTS

We would love to have you join us! To start your membership with WTS, go to our website using the QR code or URL below.

SCAN QR CODE OR USE URL:

<https://www.wtsinternational.org/chapters/central-florida>



**CLICK ON JOIN WTS BUTTON
(UPPER RIGHT CORNER)**



Follow us on Social Media

Stay connected with all things WTS Central Florida by following us on social media. Be sure to use the hashtag #WTSCFL in any of your chapter-related posts! We love to see and share your WTS content.

Here are the links if you need them:

- WTSCFL Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/wtscentralflorida>
- WTSCFL Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/55161918824>
- WTSCFL Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/wtscentralflorida/>
- WTSCFL Twitter: <https://twitter.com/wtscentralfla>
- WTSCFL LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/wtscfl/>