

HOT CHAPTER NEWSLETTER



WTS HOT Chapter Newsletter 2025 | Volume 3

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President's Letter



Welcome to Fall WTS Heart of Texas Chapter!

As we enter the final part of 2025, we celebrate all that this chapter has accomplished over the summer and thank all our volunteers and members for their contributions.

As a reminder, make sure to continue tracking our updates on our [website](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#). Please also bookmark and follow these pages to stay updated with all the events the Chapter is doing.

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

July

- » Our second **Lattes and Leadership** session was held at Genuine Joe Coffeehouse on July 23, where Doise Miers, Community Outreach Manager at Capital Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), shared about her career path and some personal and professional insights.
- » **Also in July, the WTS Heart of Texas Chapter and ASHE Central Texas chapter co-hosted an Adopt-A-Highway Clean-Up** on July 19. The event was a great success, showcasing once again the impact that Central Texas transportation professionals can have on our communities.
- » Lastly, the Membership Committee held our first **Summer Arts & Ale Social** at Austin Beerworks on July 22nd. This gathering, which attracted over 50 people, featured great food, drinks, and, most importantly, crafts!

August

- » The last **Lattes and Leadership** session of the year was held on August 20th at Kick Butt Coffee, where we had a conversation with Sonya Hernandez, PG, from TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division.
- » Our Corporate and Agency Partners and Membership Committee hosted the Heart of Texas chapter's **Annual Appreciation Event** for Corporate and Agency Partners and Members at the Archer Hotel on August 28. During this event, we honored three women leaders in Central Texas who are key to advancing transportation in our communities:
 - + Dottie Watkins, President/CEO, CapMetro
 - + Dr. Michelle Cohen, Hays County Commissioner
 - + Jessica Butler, PE, Director of Engineering & Safety Ops, TxDOT

September

- » The membership committee hosted our first **Golfing Clinic** in a few years at First Tee Greater Austin on September 12.
- » We also just wrapped up our **Annual Professional Development Seminar** at Maggiano's on September 26.

Check out our whole newsletter for highlights and photos of all these events.

Upcoming Events

We'll wrap up our year with our last luncheons and our annual holiday party.





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CP/AP & Member's Only Event

Thank you to everyone who attended our 2025 CP/AP Event, where we proudly honored three remarkable women in transportation in Central Texas: Dottie Watkins of CapMetro, Jessica Butler of TxDOT, and Dr. Michelle Cohen of Hays County. Each of these inspiring leaders shared their personal career journeys and expressed heartfelt gratitude to those who supported and believed in them along the way. It was a powerful celebration of perseverance, leadership, and achievement. Join us in recognizing their incredible contributions to the future of transportation!



President's Letter Continued

October

- » Our **October Luncheon** at Maggiano's will have **Ghizlane Badawi (Chief Executive Officer at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport)**, who will share insights into her leadership during a period of major growth and change.

November

- » During the **November Luncheon** at Maggiano's, **Susan Howard and Julie Beaubien (TxDOT)** will share insights into TxDOT's new Strategic Public Engagement Guidance (SPEG)

December

- » Look out for our **Annual Holiday Party**, location and date will be announced.

If you have questions or would like to get more involved, please don't hesitate to reach out.

We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event as we wrap up 2025!

Thanks,

Laura Friello, PE
President, WTS Heart of Texas Chapter

July Lattes & Leadership

Doise Miers, Community Outreach Manager, Capital Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO)

At the July Lattes and Leadership discussion, Doise Miers shared her inspiring journey from tour guide to TxDOT to the Community Outreach Manager at CAMPO, emphasizing the importance of public involvement and community outreach in transportation planning. Her early work on the Trans-Texas Corridor and I-69 projects highlighted the importance of building trust with communities, particularly in areas where skepticism toward government agencies was prevalent. She emphasized the value of listening deeply to diverse perspectives, including tribal communities in East Texas and families of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, to shape more inclusive and responsive infrastructure planning.

At CAMPO, Doise led the evolution of outreach strategies, especially during the pandemic, when she successfully transitioned engagement efforts to virtual platforms while maintaining high levels of public input. She also shared practical advice for navigating community-designer conflicts, emphasizing the importance of early outreach, understanding local values, and maintaining transparency. She encouraged young people starting their careers to stay open-minded, ask questions, and embrace learning, reminding us that meaningful progress often begins with listening.



Doise's approach, grounded in flexibility, humility, and a willingness to ask questions, has set a high standard for public engagement. Her story is a powerful reminder of how technical projects benefit from human-centered leadership and meaningful community input.



Corporate Sponsor Spotlight

Mallory Matthews HDR



Mallory Matthews is a Senior Marketing Coordinator at HDR, supporting the Transportation Business Group.

She collaborates with marketing and project managers to develop a wide range of materials, including proposals, presentations, newsletters, and award submissions. Prior to joining HDR in August 2022, Mallory spent 14 years as a high school English teacher, a background that has greatly enriched her approach to technical writing and strategic collaboration.

In addition to her marketing role, Mallory serves as co-chair of HDR’s Central Texas Women’s Employee Network Group (ENG). In this capacity, she helps organize internal events such as lunch-and-learns, networking opportunities, and monthly planning meetings. Her involvement reflects HDR’s broader commitment to fostering



an inclusive and supportive workplace.

October Luncheon

Registration is Open!

Chizlane Badawi, CEO,
Austin-Bergstrom
International Airport

Date: Wednesday, October 15, 2025
Time: 11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Location:
Maggiano’s Little Italy
10910 Domain Dr, Suite 100
Austin, TX 78758



Chizlane Badawi will share insights on her leadership during a period of major growth and change. She will highlight Journey With AUS, the multi-year Airport

Expansion and Development Program (AEDP) designed to meet the needs of Central Texas’ rapidly growing region. The program includes new gates, upgraded facilities, and a modernized passenger experience, all while maintaining the unique character of Austin and the surrounding communities.

August Lattes & Leadership

Sonya Hernandez, PG, Project Delivery Section Director at the TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division (ENV)

Sonya Hernandez, PG, at Environmental Affairs Division at TxDOT, shared her inspiring journey from an art major at a Liberal Arts College to leading major infrastructure projects across Texas. With a background in studio art and geology from Colorado College and a graduate degree in geological science from Indiana University, Sonya began her career as a staff geologist at TxDOT. She rose through the ranks, tackling increasingly complex projects, including the Harbor Bridge in Corpus Christi, the South Padre Island second crossing, and Mobility35 Capital Express (CapEx). Now based in the Environmental Affairs Division, Sonya reflected on the power of mentorship and overcoming imposter syndrome, crediting



key figures—from a high school teacher to her TxDOT manager—for helping her find confidence and purpose. Her story highlights the importance of leadership, trust, and advocacy in fostering resilient teams and achieving meaningful careers.

WTS/ASHE Joint Highway Clean Up

Our summer season of membership events kicked off with a collaborative effort with the local ASHE chapter at their annual Adopt-A-Highway Clean-Up Event on July 19th. Thanks to the support and dedication of our wonderful volunteers, the stretch of FM 734 (W. Parmer Ln) near Brushy Creek now gleams with cleanliness and pride.

The event began bright and early at 8:00 AM, with volunteers armed with gloves, PPE, trash bags, and a strong sense of community spirit. Over 11 bags of trash were collected across the 2-mile stretch by noon!

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers and the ASHE chapter who made this event a success. Your commitment to our community is invaluable. Let’s continue to work together to keep our highways clean and our environment thriving.



Corporate Sponsor Highlight

VOLKERT100

Adeliza Ramirez, PE
Volkert



Adeliza Ramirez, PE, has been with Volkert for six years and is one of two women who serve as area office managers in Volkert’s Southwest Region offices. Adeliza oversees the Austin office and leads a great team of design engineers, working daily on transportation projects that shape safer, more connected roadways and make the community a better place. Adeliza’s career has grown in tandem with Volkert’s expanding presence in Texas. Before joining the team, she served as the TxDOT Schematic Project Manager for the \$107 million IH 35 at SH 123 interchange in San Marcos. Since then, both Adeliza and Volkert have taken on increasingly complex challenges in their efforts to deliver safer, more efficient transportation for the communities they serve. After joining the firm, she contributed as a project engineer on the \$607M Mobility35 Capital Express (CapEx) North project. Today, with the SH 123 interchange now fully constructed, Adeliza is mentoring Volkert’s next generation of engineers while guiding the PS&E design for the \$2B CapEx Central–University section—continuing her commitment to making the community a better place through meaningful infrastructure.

As the Vice President of the WTS Heart of Texas Chapter, Adeliza appreciates all the opportunities that WTS has provided her and encourages others to join the organization to learn about various projects and techniques. Additionally, she was awarded Member of the Year in 2024.

Bethany Shearrer, PE
Volkert



Bethany Shearrer, PE, is one of two women who are area office managers in Volkert’s Southwest Region offices. Bethany oversees the Round Rock office and has been with Volkert for five years. She works daily on various transportation engineering projects, ranging from municipal roadways to rural highways and urban interstates, all while managing the Round Rock office and teaching young engineers. She was the Roadway Task Lead on the \$607 million PS&E design project for the Mobility35 Capital Express (CapEx) North, which is currently under construction and will improve operational efficiency, providing additional improvements along IH 35 in Austin, Texas. She now continues in this role on the \$2B Central-University section of the capital expenditure (CapEx) program.

As a member of the WTS Heart of Texas Chapter, Bethany seeks to learn from other women in the industry and apply those teachings to her engineers in Round Rock. She was also awarded the Innovative Transportation Solutions Award for CapEx North in 2021.

At Volkert, we want to see our people grow through our projects. We make sure that our employees do what they want to do and love what they do through transparency, flexibility, and open communication. The voices of women are heard here at Volkert, and we are proud to employ incredible women in engineering and in our administrative services.

Summer Social: Arts & Ale

Shortly after the highway clean-up, the Membership Committee hosted the chapter’s first-ever Arts & Ale event on July 23rd at Austin Beerworks! With over 80 registrants and almost 50 attendees, participants unleashed their creativity onto a variety of seasonal, landscape, and destination-themed paint-by-numbers canvases, while sipping on fantastic brews. Whether seasoned artists or first-time painters, everyone found their unique expression, creating vibrant pieces that captured the essence of the summer!

Thank you to everyone who attended and made this event a grand success. Stay tuned, it may be a “back by popular demand” event!



Corporate Sponsor Highlight



Jenn Golech Kimley-Horn

With more than 25 years in the transportation industry, Jenn Golech has built a career rooted in public service, transit innovation, and collaborative leadership. She began her journey behind the wheel as a college bus driver at Kent State University and has since held pivotal roles at Capital Metro (CapMetro), the City of Austin, and for Project Connect, where she's helped to shape transformative mobility programs across Central Texas. Now serving as Transit Practice Leader at Kimley-Horn, Jenn leads with a visionary approach to planning, deep operational expertise, and a talent for stakeholder coordination and organizational development. She manages complex transit initiatives across the country, guiding public agencies through strategic planning, infrastructure delivery, and federal grant programs. She is a proud WTS member and advocate for advancing women in transportation and is deeply committed to mentoring the next generation of industry leaders through professional development, knowledge-sharing, and active engagement in the WTS community. Outside of work, Jenn enjoys cheering on her daughter, a senior volleyball player at Ann Richards High School in Austin—a school known for empowering young women in STEM and public service.

Kimley-Horn recognizes the importance of having its employees participate in WTS to help women in practice obtain tools of success and strengthen their careers in the transportation industry. Introduced in early 2015, “LIFT” (Lasting Impact for Tomorrow) is Kimley-Horn’s initiative to recruit, develop, and retain women in engineering and planning at Kimley-Horn.



Wendy Travis, AICP Garver

An active member of WTS, Garver Southwest Regional Director for Transportation Wendy Travis, AICP, has served as an advocate and supporter of women in the industry throughout her 30-year, trailblazing career.

Wendy joined Garver in 2017. She became the firm’s first female regional director of transportation and is a firm owner and vice president. She manages a team of over 50 transportation engineering consultants, supervising the delivery of high-quality service for infrastructure projects across the Lone Star State. In August, she was named a finalist for the Austin Business Journal's Women in Business Awards, in recognition of her significant contributions to the Texas transportation system and the transportation industry throughout her accomplished career.

With WTS, Wendy has served as the vice president of the North Florida chapter, founded and served as the first president of the North Carolina chapter, and helped re-establish the Heart of Texas chapter, serving as the Membership Chair. She has also served as a mentor for high school students through WTS's TransportationYOU program, has been a mentor through WTS’s mentoring program, and she currently serves on the Heart of Texas Chapter Foundation Board.

Upcoming November Luncheon

Date:
 Wednesday, November 19, 2025
Time:
 11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Location:
 Maggiano's Little Italy
 10910 Domain Dr, Suite 100
 Austin, TX 78758

Susan Howard and Julie Beaubien (TxDOT) will share insights into TxDOT’s new Strategic Public Engagement Guidance (SPEG)



September Social: Golf Clinic

It wouldn't be a summer day in September without a day on the green! On September 12th, First Tee of Greater Austin hosted a group of first-time golfers, specifically exposing women to the game for career advancement, development, networking, and golf etiquette.

The event teed off at 4:00 PM with an impressive turnout of both budding golfers and seasoned players eager to refine their skills. Our participants were welcomed by the friendly staff and treated to light snacks and beverages to fuel up for the session ahead.

Under the expert guidance of seasoned golf professionals, attendees were divided into three groups and rotated through practice areas for putting, driving, and chipping. Over the course of the clinic, everyone received personalized tips and instructions from the basics of the golf swing to mastering the short game. The one-on-one coaching ensured that every participant gained valuable insights to enhance their game.

To cap off the event, participants had the opportunity to network and engage with the instructors and fellow group members, sharing their experiences, discussing what they had learned, and forging new relationships. Many attendees left the event feeling more confident and motivated to continue practicing their new skills, and some have even signed up for the women-only golf program.

A sincere thanks to all our participants and the dedicated golf instructors who made this event possible on a Friday afternoon. Your enthusiasm and participation are what made this day a swinging success. Stay tuned for more upcoming events that promise to take your golf game to the next level!



Annual Professional Development Seminar

Facing Challenges in Project Delivery: What To Do When Things Go Wrong!

Speakers:



Arin Gray
President
CD&P



Shirley Nichols
Environmental Planning Director
WSP



Omar De Leon, PE
Director of Maintenance
TxDOT



Bradley East, MS, PE
Director of Operations
Polaris Forensics



Victor Vargas, PE
Senior Construction Manager
HNTB



If you attended the 2025 Professional Development Seminar, please use the QR code below to take our after event survey.

Thank you for attending!



2025 Remaining

events

- Oct** **10/15** **Monthly Luncheon: Ghizlane Badawi with AUS**
- Nov** **11/19** **Monthly Luncheon: Susan Howard and Julie Beaubien with TxDOT**
- Dec** **TBD** **Winter Networking Event**

2025 Corporate & Agency Partners



Advancing women
 Advancing transportation
 > Heart of Texas

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