

# The Voice

NOVEMBER 2010



THE VOICE OF TENNESSEE'S ENGINEERING COMPANIES

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The Crom Corporation

United Structural Systems, Inc.

## Nashville's New Riverfront Plan Will Transform Area

by Edward C. Owens  
*Waterfront Redevelopment Director,  
Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency  
Nashville, Tennessee*

Since the initial founding of the Nashbor-



Ed Owens

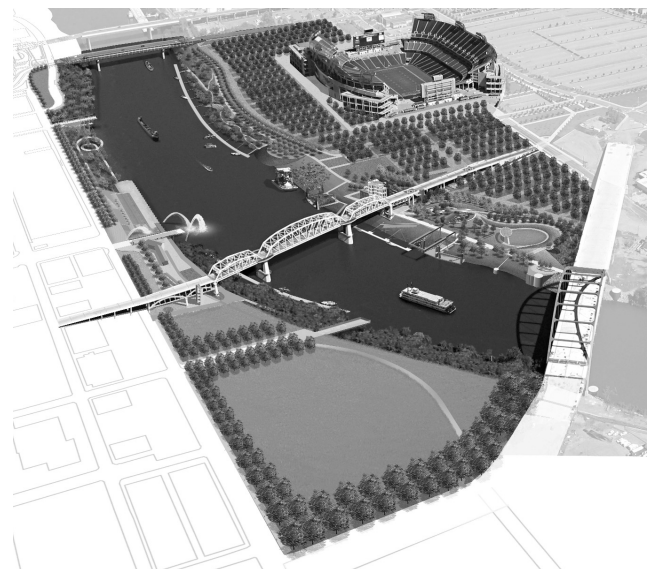
ough settlement in the late 1780s on a small bluff above the water's edge, the Cumberland River has served as an important economic and social focal point for the city of Nashville. The long-term goal of revitalizing Nashville's downtown waterfronts began in the 1980s under the administration of Mayor Richard Fulton with construction of Riverfront Park. Today, that park continues to be the epicenter of city-wide celebrations and entertainment events, including the annual Fourth of July fireworks extravaganza and the Country Music Association (CMA) festival.

In 2007, the community participated in the formulation of the

*The Nashville Riverfront Concept Plan calls for development of a series of new parks, open space and recreational amenities along both banks of the downtown riverfront.*

*Nashville Riverfront Concept Plan.* Encompassing approximately 5,200 acres along a 5.5-mile stretch of the downtown river corridor, that plan advocates the creation of expansive public open spaces and recreational amenities along the river corridor as a catalyst for transformation of former industrial districts to new mixed-use urban neighborhoods. This ambitious 20-year vision will establish the downtown riverfront area as the city's cultural and entertainment center for both local residents and visitors from around the world.

*(continued on page 2)*



# Funds for Infrastructure Projects Needed Now

by Steve Bostic, PE  
President, ACEC of Tennessee

Something alarming is happening across Tennessee and throughout the nation. The infrastructure systems that allow water to flow, traffic to move, and communities to thrive are deteriorating.



Steve Bostic

Occasionally, you read about the problem in the headlines -- when a bridge collapses, a gas pipeline ruptures, a road crumbles, or a sewage treatment plant fails. However, most of the time, the problem of infrastructure maintenance and improvement is ignored or pushed aside.

Funds are not appropriated for projects, work is delayed, and the deterioration continues and increases.

Costs to maintain and improve infrastructure facilities are rising. Unfunded mandates strain utilities, especially the smaller ones, at a time when utilities are dealing with flat or declining revenues. Federal, state, and local

governments are all struggling to maintain existing roads that are deteriorating. State and federal Departments of Transportation have large backlogs of projects that are necessary, however, adequate funding is not available.

**The need is real and urgent.** Infrastructure systems impact our personal, community, and business lives every day. Infrastructure projects also create jobs and result in economic development opportunities.

It may be easier to appropriate money for projects that have higher visibility and are more popular. However, nothing is as essential to our communities, state and nation as infrastructure. When infrastructure fails, we all feel the impact.

**Now is the time to end neglect of our infrastructure.** After the election, I urge you to contact newly elected and re-elected local, state and national officials and urge them to adequately fund infrastructure projects to keep pace with needs. Unless the problem is addressed now, it will become greater and more urgent in the years ahead.

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## Riverfront Plan *(continued from page 1)*

### Parks are first step

As a first step, the *Nashville Riverfront Concept Plan* calls for development of a series of new parks, open space and recreational amenities along both banks of the downtown riverfront. With a total estimated cost of \$55 - \$60 million, full implementation of that plan would effectively double public park land along the riverfront with new recreational boat docking facilities, music performance venues, boardwalks, river overlooks and piers. Mayor Karl Dean and the Metropolitan Council have demonstrated their full support for that *New Riverfront Park Plan* by allocating the first infusion of \$30 million to construct the first series of projects.

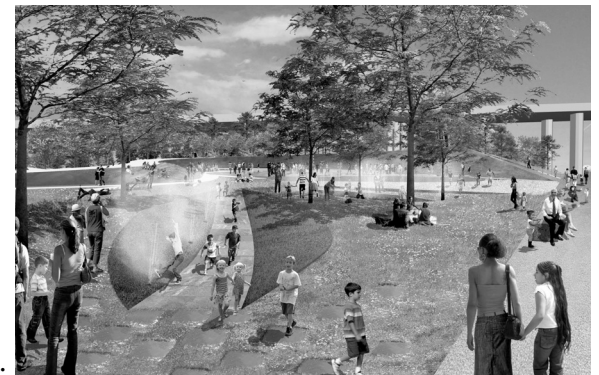
The inaugural project will be Riverfront Play Park, a 6.5-acre, \$11 million public park designed to engage children of all ages with interactive features including natural play equipment, spray-grounds, water jets, bridges, climbing walls and explorer paths. The park will also include picnic and seating areas, a performance stage and access to a refurbished industrial gantry extending over the river. Construction is underway with a grand opening scheduled for summer 2011.

Running concurrent with construction of the

*The Riverfront Play Park will include water features.*

Play Park is renovation and adaptive reuse of the former Nashville Bridge Company (NABRICO) building situated immediately adjacent to the new park at the foot of the historic Shelby Street Pedestrian Bridge. Key elements of that \$8.5 million renovation program include public restrooms, a Parks Department staff office, riverside concession stand and new stairway and elevator connections between the Shelby Street Pedestrian Bridge deck and the riverbank below.

Looking ahead, timing and sequencing for construction of additional riverfront projects recommended by the *New Riverfront Park Plan* will be determined by the availability of funding resources and receipt of federal permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



# Profile: A Snapshot Look at Member Firms

by John Perry, PE\*  
Chair, Business Practices Committee  
ACEC of Tennessee

Earlier this year, the Business Practices Committee of ACEC of Tennessee polled the organization's members to identify the issues that are important to them. More than 35% of member firms responded, which provided a good snapshot of the overall thoughts and concerns of the membership.



John Perry

The committee plans to use the information gathered to set its agenda. A summary of the survey results was distributed to member firms with the promise to survey the firms again in early 2011. This

will provide more useful information when the new data can be compared to information gathered in 2010. We will also provide questions that separate responses from firms with national practices from those operating only in Tennessee.

#### What did we learn in the 2010 survey?

- 90% of the firms have been in business over 20 years;
- Employment in firms was expected to remain stable in 2010;

- The top five practice areas are Civil-Transportation, Civil-Water/Wastewater, Civil-Municipal, Geotechnical/Environmental and Structural (buildings);
- 13% of firms have a national client base, 27% multistate, and 21% regional;
- 18% of firms said they planned to add staff in 2010;
- Most firms expected revenue to remain about the same when compared to 2009;
- 10% of firms indicated the available workforce was better than in the past;
- Nearly 25% of firms have participated in design-build procurement, and 35% said they will consider this in the future;
- 25% of firms expected an increase in requests for qualifications in 2010;
- 75% of clients solicit fees using Qualifications-Based Selection.

At the time we gathered this data, it appeared that most respondents were optimistic about the economy. Firms planned to maintain their workforce in 2010, rather than declining further. And like it or not, most firms are participating in design-build or believe it will be necessary in the future.

*\*John Perry is an Associate at Kimley-Horn and Associates.*

## WELCOME, NEW MEMBER

American Engineers, Inc.  
12020 Coreland Drive,  
Ste. 101  
Madison, TN 37115  
(615) 865-1522  
www.aei.cc

#### Key Contact:

Peter J. Overmohle, PE,  
Vice President  
povermohle@aei.cc

AEI is a full service engineering, surveying and geotechnical firm serving the southeast region of the US. With its newest branch office in Tennessee, it is committed to serving clients in this region. Its disciplines include civil-general, civil-structural, civil-transportation, environmental, geotechnical, hydrology, industrial, land, development, planning, surveying/GIS/mapping, and water/wastewater as well as aviation management and development.



**Over in Memphis** — Representatives of ACEC of Tennessee and the American Institute of Architects Tennessee met with Senator Reggie Tate in Memphis during the recent State Architects' and Engineers' Board Meeting. Pictured left to right are James Collins, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.; Candy Toler, ACEC of Tennessee; Harvey Matheny, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.; Connie Wallace, AIA Tennessee; and Senator Tate. Among the topics discussed with Senator Tate were the value of Qualifications-Based Selection for design professionals and the upcoming legislative session.

## CALENDAR

### DECEMBER

# 1

Professional Liability  
Seminar  
Knoxville  
Information:  
ctoler@tnec.org

### DECEMBER

# 2

Professional Liability  
Seminar  
Nashville  
Information:  
ctoler@tnec.org

### DECEMBER

# 3

Professional Liability  
Seminar  
Memphis  
Information:  
ctoler@tnec.org

### FEBRUARY

# 20-26

Engineers' Week

## MEMBER NEWS

- The transportation engineering and surveying portion of *Long Engineering, Inc.* has been purchased by TranSystems, Kansas City, Mo. The purchase includes Long's office in Nashville.
- *Everett Cowan, PE, Gresham, Smith and Partners*, Nashville, will become chairman of the ACEC Committee of Fellows at the ACEC national spring meeting in March 2011.

Tennessee Engineering Center  
800 Fort Negley Boulevard  
Nashville, TN 37203

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## December Seminars for Engineers

Engineers love smart, cost-effective solutions. So you should love the educational opportunity coming up in December to earn four (4) professional development hours.

The Crow Friedman Group's "road show" is coming to Knoxville (Dec. 1), Nashville (Dec. 2), and Memphis (Dec. 3). Topics for the day include *The Salubrious Nature of Risk* and *Is Integrated Project Delivery Viable?*

Check What's New? on the website ([www.acectn.org](http://www.acectn.org)). Sign-up now to join your colleagues for this program -- and to learn the meaning of "salubrious."

### FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Applause: Grants to Engineering Schools

by Candy Toler  
Executive Director, ACEC of Tennessee

The members of the Tennessee Board of Architectural and Engineering Examiners are pleased to report that the Board approved grants of \$200,000 to seven state-funded universities. The funds allow state colleges and universities to purchase instructional, computer and laboratory equipment to enhance the educational experience for students in accredited architectural, engineering, and interior design programs.



Candy Toler

"Education lays the foundation to developing the knowledge and skills needed to practice a profession and protect the public, so this program is an integral part of the Board's mission to protect the public's health, safety and welfare," said John Cothron, executive director.

Engineering schools receiving grant funds this year are:

- **Tennessee State University:** \$18,545 to the College of Engineering, Technology and Computer Science for a multi-zone building energy management training unit;

- **Tennessee Technological University:** \$33,515 to the College of Engineering to purchase lab equipment, buckling test apparatuses, a truss load testing system, a dual-set diffusion cell, and an energy training station;

- **University of Memphis:** \$19,565 to the College of Engineering for digital oscilloscopes and signal generators;

- **University of Tennessee-Chattanooga:** \$19,513 to the College of Engineering and Computer Science to purchase total stations and laptop computers to support development of a new course in geomatics engineering;

- **University of Tennessee-Knoxville:** \$42,582 to the College of Engineering for a multi-sample gamma spectrometer for the new Nuclear Security Science and Analysis program, which will be used for radiation detection and measurement;

- **University of Tennessee-Martin:** \$16,280 to the College of Engineering and Natural Sciences to purchase a computer numerically controlled lathe for the Automated Production Laboratory.

Grant funding was approved by the General Assembly. The Board has awarded over \$1.6 million in grant funds since the inception of the program in 2002.