

# The Voice

## ACEC

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING  
COMPANIES OF TENNESSEE

THE VOICE OF TENNESSEE'S ENGINEERING COMPANIES

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Thomas & Betts Corporation

United Structural Systems, Inc.

## Tennessee Tech Project Focuses on Instruction of STEM Subjects

by Karen Lykins, News Bureau Director,  
Office of Public Affairs,  
Tennessee Tech University

In response to a dwindling interest in America in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields, Tennessee Tech University plans to build a center to improve the way teachers and professors—from preschool through college—teach STEM subjects.



**Karen Lykins**

The Millard Oakley STEM Center, named for the benefactor who has already donated \$2 million in private funds to the effort, recently received another funding boost of more than \$1 million. The new federal dollars came in two parts, a \$300,000 grant and a \$740,000 interest-free loan from

USDA Rural Development through the Caney Fork Electric Cooperative. The funds come in addition to more than \$1.29 million in previous federal grants for the center.

At a dinner in honor of Oakley and his wife, JJ, many state leaders, including Gov. Phil Bredesen, Former U.S. Ambassador to China James Sasser, and U.S. Congressmen Harold Ford Jr., Bart Gordon and Lincoln Davis praised the foresight of the project.

"This project is one that will have both immediate and long-term impact," said TTU President Bob Bell. "By helping our teachers today learn better methods to use in the classroom, we're also helping all the future generations of students who will study and work in the science-, technology-, engineering- and math-related fields."

*(continued on page 2)*

*Rendering of the \$8 million Millard Oakley STEM Center that will be constructed at Tennessee Tech University, Cookeville*



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# Two Significant Events for Tennessee's Engineering Companies

by James D. Morinec, PE  
President, ACEC of Tennessee

In 2008, ACEC of Tennessee will celebrate its 40th anniversary. Over the past 40 years, the organization has grown into a formidable force representing and promoting the interests of the consulting engineering firms in Tennessee. You will learn about plans to commemorate this milestone anniversary in the coming months.



**James D. Morinec**

However, *now* is the time to begin planning to submit entries in the annual *Engineering Excellence Awards* (EEA) competition; the deadline for entries is November 2. This is the 19th year that ACEC of Tennessee has sponsored this prestigious event. In addition to the bragging rights an award brings within the consulting community, the competition provides materials that will help achieve two of the three goals established for the organization this year.

As part of the event publicity campaign, news releases are provided to local news outlets detail-

ing the projects and the firms that designed them. In addition, the project boards are available to high schools and universities to help promote careers in engineering. In past years, the boards have been displayed at Christian Brothers University in Memphis, the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, and Vanderbilt University in Nashville. Keep this potential use on college campuses in mind when developing your project boards.

Informing the public of the many ways that engineers impact their lives is also a great way to educate politicians. Why? When people understand the issues related to water quality, water resources management, alternative transportation modes, and innovative financing methods for public works projects, they can better communicate their positions on these issues to political leaders. In response, the elected officials must become informed to communicate with their constituents.

With the many benefits that we all gain through the *Engineering Excellence Awards* competition, I encourage every member firm to enter a project this year. A record number of EEA entries would be a great way to enter our organization's 40th anniversary year.

## Instruction of STEM Subjects *continued from page 1*

The Millard Oakley STEM Center will serve as a point of collaboration between university faculty members and public school teachers. As university faculty and students conduct research and develop improved teaching methods, the center will help them share that knowledge with area teachers, who will be able to use the center for their own research and teaching plans.

The university is already coordinating collaborative programs with regional schools on STEM-related projects. Outreach programs for students include Engineering A Future, an annual event that promotes curiosity and abilities in the sciences for young women; Lego League tournaments; and the President's Academy for Emerging Technologies.

### \$8 Million STEM Center

The center will house state-of-the-art laboratories to help train teachers in the region to develop better methods of teaching science-related subjects with appropriate technology. Area schools may use the center for hands-on activities based on real-world challenges such as space exploration, robotics and environmental protection.

Included in the \$8 million, 26,000 square-foot building will be a 200-seat tiered auditorium

featuring a demonstration table with water, gas and electrical outlets as well as full electronic presentation and recording capabilities and learning studio laboratories featuring integrated exploration and presentation capabilities.

The learning studio laboratories will also provide technology to focus on education in biology and chemistry, Earth and space sciences, physics and engineering, and mathematics. The electronic infrastructure will allow teachers to capture learning activities for research and distance learning.

Construction document phase will begin in the next few months. Bidding of the project should occur in Spring 2008, with construction commencing in Summer 2008. University officials anticipate opening in late 2009 or early 2010.

The number of STEM job openings in the U.S. is growing at a rate more than five times that of the number of American college students graduating with degrees in STEM fields, according to a report by the Task Force on American Innovation, and the number of STEM graduates in some other countries already exceeds the number here.

# Engineering Excellence Awards: It's Time to Submit Your Winning Entry

November 2 is the deadline to submit a "winning" entry from your firm for the 2008 *Engineering Excellence Awards* (EEA) competition. As has been said in the past, you can't



**David Harrell**

win, if you don't enter! Submission of the one-page entry form by November 2 is the first step toward receiving a prestigious EEA award during a gala banquet at the Hilton Nashville Downtown on March 4, 2008.

"Don't miss this opportunity. Projects of any size and

budget are eligible. An Honor Award will be presented in each entry category and an overall Grand Award will be presented," said David Harrell, P.E., chair of the awards program and vice president at Knoxville engineering firm Vaughn and Melton.

Paula Harris, CPSM, vice president of corporate business development at Barge, Waggoner Sumner and Cannon, is co-chair of the awards program. She pointed out that there are ten (10) entry categories for the 2008 competition. They are: A) Studies, Research and Consulting Engineering Services; B)



**Paula Harris**

Building/Technology Systems; C) Structural Systems; D) Survey & Mapping Technology; E) Environmental; F) Water and Wastewater; G) Water Resources; H) Transportation; I) Special Projects; and J) Small Projects.

"This is a chance to brag and shine. Firms are encouraged to enter projects in several categories," said Harrell.

Questions? Need another entry form? Lost the entry form that you received in September? Official entry forms are available at [www.acectn.org](http://www.acectn.org) or contact Judy Logue at 615-242-2486 or at [jlogue@tnec.org](mailto:jlogue@tnec.org).

## Engineering Excellence Awards: 2007 Winners

*2007 Grand Award for Engineering Excellence*  
EnSafe Inc., Memphis

*Honor Award for Studies, Research & Consulting Engineering Services*  
PBS&J, Nashville

*Honor Award for Building/Technology Systems*  
I.C. Thomasson Associates, Inc., Nashville

*Honor Award for Survey & Mapping Technology*  
PBS&J, Nashville

*Honor Award for Water & Wastewater*  
ARCADIS, Chattanooga

*Honor Award for Water Resources*  
CDM, Nashville

*Honor Award for Transportation*  
Florence & Hutcheson, Inc., Nashville

*Honor Award for Special Projects*  
Hart Freeland Roberts, Inc., Nashville

*Honor Award for Small Projects*  
EnSafe Inc., Memphis

## Officers and Board Elected for Memphis Chapter

Stacey Morris, PE, CPESC, vice president and chief transportation engineer at ETI Corporation, has been elected president of the Memphis Chapter of ACEC of Tennessee. Also



**Stacey Morris**

serving with Morris as officers of the organization, whose membership is comprised of more than 30 Memphis engineering firms, are president-elect Tim Verner, PE, vice president at Fisher & Arnold, Inc.; secretary Robert McIvor Jr., PE, area manager at Parsons

Transportation Group; and treasurer David C. Bradford Jr., PE, mechanical division director at

SSR Ellers. John Perry, PE, senior project manager at Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc., is immediate past president.



**Tim Verner**

Also serving on the Board are: Bruce Fisackerly, PE, principal at Allen & Hoshall, Inc.; Charles (Chuck) K. Hodges, PE, electrical engineer at OGCB, Inc.; Tim Gibson, PE, civil project manager at Askew Hargraves Harcourt & Associates, Inc.; Jack Scherer, PE, regional manager at Buchart Horn, Inc.; and Jim Speakman, PE, PhD, senior vice president at EnSafe Inc.

## CALENDAR

**OCTOBER  
12**

Board Meeting  
9:00 a.m. - noon  
Tennessee Engineering  
Center

**OCTOBER  
31**

Deadline to Submit  
Applications for  
Scholarship Program  
Information:  
[ctoler@tnec.org](mailto:ctoler@tnec.org)

**NOVEMBER  
2**

Deadline to Submit  
Entries for *Engineering  
Excellence Awards*  
Information:  
[jlogue@tnec.org](mailto:jlogue@tnec.org)

**DECEMBER  
5**

Professional Liability  
Seminar, Knoxville  
Information:  
[ctoler@tnec.org](mailto:ctoler@tnec.org)

**DECEMBER  
6**

Professional Liability  
Seminar, Nashville  
Information:  
[ctoler@tnec.org](mailto:ctoler@tnec.org)

**DECEMBER  
7**

Professional Liability  
Seminar, Memphis  
Information:  
[ctoler@tnec.org](mailto:ctoler@tnec.org)

Tennessee Engineering Center  
800 Fort Negley Boulevard  
Nashville, TN 37203

Return Service Requested

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## Member News

- Askew Hargraves Harcourt & Associates, Inc., Memphis, has announced the addition of the following staff members: Matthew Singleton, mechanical designer; Donna M. Thomas, lead marketing coordinator; Bob Watson, senior project coordinator; and Cecil Sowell, who will be branch manager of the firm's office in Hernando, Mississippi, which is slated to open during the last quarter of 2007.
- Rex "Skip" Ingle has joined Barge Waggoner Sumner and Cannon, Inc., as an architectural designer in the firm's Oak Ridge office.

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### *Developing the Next Generation of Engineers*

by Candy Toler  
Executive Director, ACEC of Tennessee

**A**CEC of Tennessee has long been concerned about the reduction in the number of students going into engineering. The number of bachelor's degrees awarded in engineering has dropped by almost 20% in the last 20 years, while the current engineering workforce is getting older.



Candy Toler

In a front page article appearing in this newsletter, we learn more about the initiatives at Tennessee Tech to enhance science, technology, engineering and math (also known as STEM) education programs in Tennessee schools. ACEC of Tennessee encourages young engineers

through its engineering scholarship program, now in its sixth year.

"The scholarship program is another example of how ACEC of Tennessee is committed to education and the future of our profession," observed David Sparkes, PE, Kimley-Horn & Associates, Memphis, who chairs the committee that will review applications. Other members of the committee are Rebecca

Brooks, PE, Wilbur Smith Associates, Nashville; Andrew Hutsell, PE, Vaughn & Melton, Knoxville; and Lee Wilson, PE, Tetra Tech, Inc., Memphis.

Engineering and land surveying students who are entering their junior, senior, fifth or graduate year in the fall of 2008 may qualify for the \$1,000 grant. Details about eligibility and the application are available on

<http://www.acectn.org/New%20Web/Scholar.htm>

The application process includes writing an essay on the role of the consulting engineer and surveyor in shaping and protecting the natural environment. Grade point average and college activities are also factors in the evaluation.

In addition to the state scholarship, our national organization will award several scholarships totaling \$20,000 for which the state winner will be considered. Prior winners of the ACEC of Tennessee scholarship were students at Tennessee Tech, Vanderbilt and UT-Knoxville. One winner of the Tennessee scholarship was runner-up in the national ACEC competition and received an additional \$3,000 scholarship.

**Scholarship applications must be submitted to ACEC of Tennessee no later than October 31, 2007.** Please encourage qualifying engineering students to submit their applications.