

**KEVIN ARTL**  
PRESIDENT & CEO

## LEADERSHIP & POLICY BRIEFING

April 2025

### Liberation Day impacts: Engineering sector challenges



President Trump declared April 2, 2025, as "Liberation Day," introducing tariffs to boost domestic manufacturing. Starting April 5, 2025, at 12:01 a.m. EDT, a 10% tariff applies to all countries, with individualized higher tariffs beginning April 9.

**Why it matters:** These tariffs aim to onshore jobs and manufacturing, but their immediate effect was a financial market drop, with Dow Futures falling 3.16%.

- Economists warn tariffs can reduce economic activity and inefficiencies, with GDP forecasts already revised down.

**By the numbers:** The reciprocal tariffs hit dozens of nations, including major trading partners.

- Canada and Mexico see USMCA compliant goods at a 0% tariff, while non-compliant goods face 25% tariffs.
- China faces a 34% tariff, Vietnam 46%, EU 20%, Japan 24%, Thailand 36%, Taiwan 32%, and India 26%.

**Impact on AEC sector:** The engineering sector faces significant challenges from these tariffs,

particularly in construction materials.

- Home builders preemptively stockpiled materials, yet tariffs on steel and aluminum could amplify budget constraints, impacting both public and private projects.
- The National Association of Home Builders reports a composite lumber price increase of 0.4%, with steel tariffs potentially escalating costs further.
- Projects involving data center development, reliant on copper, may see increased costs due to supply chain disruptions, despite copper being excluded from tariffs.

**What's Excluded:** Some goods are not subject to the Reciprocal Tariff, such as humanitarian relief items, certain metals, and critical minerals.

**Market impact:** Stocks reversed sharply as reciprocal rates were unveiled. Japan's Nikkei closed down almost 3%, Europe's Stoxx 600 down 1.5%. At market opening on April 3, the DOW was down 3%, the S&P 500 down 4%, and the NASDAQ down 5%, continuing to decline.

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## Senate budget resolution: Tax bill path clears



Late Friday night, the Senate approved a new budget resolution by a vote of 51 to 48, paving the way for Congress to draft the tax bill.

**Why it matters:** This resolution uses different instructions for the House and Senate, simplifying its approval but deferring tougher decisions.

- Both chambers tackle national debt concerns differently, with the Senate adding \$1.5 trillion and the House \$4.5 trillion to address tax issues and spending cuts.
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**Key provisions:** The resolution extends 2017 tax relief, fixes R&D amortization, adjusts the SALT cap, and aligns with the President's priorities like not taxing tips or overtime.

- Senate prefers not counting tax extension costs, while the House uses a current law baseline.

**Potential tax increases:** Rumors suggest a higher individual tax rate for those earning over \$1

million and limits on state and local tax deductions for C corporations.

- ACEC's coalition influenced states to allow passthrough businesses to deduct SALT, but corporate SALT limits could be paired with passthrough restrictions.

**What's next:** House leaders plan to put the resolution on the floor next week, facing conservative pushback, so its approval remains uncertain.

- We'll provide updates as developments unfold.

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## Transportation Secretary Duffy's Senate debut



New U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy addressed the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, focusing on the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill.

**Why it matters:** The hearing spotlighted critical infrastructure projects and the fate of over 3,200 projects left from the Biden Administration.

- Duffy inherited these projects, with concerns about delays and compliance with current Administration priorities.

**Project updates:** Duffy confirmed the first Trump II-era project obligation: \$221 million for Rhode Island's Washington Bridge.

- Notably, 30% of unobligated projects were "midnight awards" from the previous administration, amounting to \$9 billion.

**Key discussions:** Senators queried Duffy on local projects and policy priorities, including air traffic control upgrades and mass transit investments.

- Duffy assured that personnel cutbacks wouldn't affect DOT's grant processing, although future reductions remain uncertain.

**Policy highlights:** Duffy addressed air traffic control spending and the contentious NEVI EV charging program.

- He committed to supporting truck parking and project delivery improvements in the next reauthorization bill.

**Looking ahead:** Duffy's testimony showcased the Administration's infrastructure priorities and the need for efficient project execution, setting the stage for ongoing legislative negotiations.

**Zoom in:** Watch the entire hearing [here](#).

# Construction spending rebounds: February 2025 growth



The U.S. Census released its latest Value of Construction Put in Place Survey, indicating a rebound in construction spending.

**Why it matters:** The seasonally adjusted annual rate reached \$2.19 trillion for February 2025, marking a 0.7% monthly increase and a 2.9% year-over-year rise.

- This growth reverses last month's decline of -0.5%, highlighting economic resilience despite recent market uncertainties.

**Sector insights:** Private construction saw a 0.9% increase, while public construction grew by 0.2%.

- The residential market rebounded with a 1.3% month-over-month growth, whereas nonresidential increased by 0.3%.

**Growth drivers:** Year-over-year sector growth revealed shifts, with Water Supply, Sewage & Waste Disposal, and Air-Related Construction leading the way.

- Amusement and Recreation continue strong growth, particularly in Sports Facilities and Performance Centers.

**Challenges:** Commercial and Highway & Street sectors face declines due to interest rate sensitivity and secular demand trends, while Health Care remains in negative growth territory.

- Data Center expansion pushed the Office sector out of the lowest-performing category, boasting a 38.8% year-over-year increase.

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Catch me up on ACEC Illinois News





**1 The ACEC Illinois Board** recently made a significant trip to Capitol Hill to engage with the Illinois Congressional delegation on crucial issues. The discussions included pending federal awards for projects like the Red Line Extension and I-290, and the importance of maintaining well-staffed Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) offices in Illinois, alongside advocating for the extension of the 2017 tax act.

**2 Meanwhile, transit governance** and funding challenges continue to stir debate in Springfield. At a recent Senate Transportation Committee hearing, Chair Ram Villivalam emphasized that additional funding for Chicago's mass transit will not proceed without reforms. Villivalam and Sen. Villanueva pressed for accountability, highlighting issues of employee treatment and high salaries.

**3 The City of Chicago's** "voluntary" effort to have vendors reduce contracts by 3% is falling flat. According to the [Chicago Tribune](#), the city has only received \$450k in contract reductions out of a goal of \$9m. The Tribune mentions ACEC Illinois and industry efforts to push back against this bad policy.

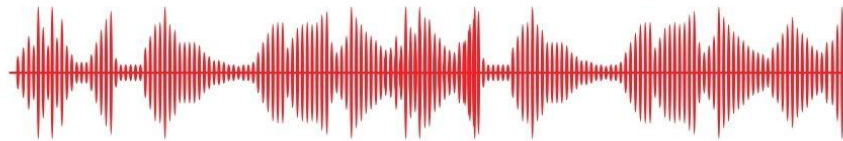
**4 You're invited to join ACEC Illinois in Springfield** on April 30th for our annual Lobby Day. This event is a chance to meet with policymakers, get updates on key issues, and share the engineering perspective. Participation is encouraged to ensure your voices are heard and to influence policy effectively. For more information and to register, [click here](#).

**5 One Shining Moment: Brian Castro** won the ACEC Illinois March Madness Bracket Contest.. Over 100 brackets were entered into the contest and it came down to a total points tie-breaker between **Brian Castro, Rafael Herrera, and LeeAnn Tomas-Foster**. **ACEC IL Board Chair-Elect Jerry Payonk** was seeking the Cinderella story with a Houston win, but the ball did not bounce his way, nor will any \$\$.





ACEC-IL's podcast "Engineering Works" interviews House Republican Leader Tony McCombie. Leader McCombie discusses the exciting details of her package of bills promoting STEM education for girls introduced this session.



**LEADER TONY MCCOMBIE**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE • DISTRICT 89**

[Listen Here](#)

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## **Member Firm Spotlight:**

### **How long have you been in the engineering industry?**

Chamlin & Associates, Inc. was established in 1952 in Peru, Illinois. The company has expanded steadily for over 73 years, with offices located in Peru, Ottawa, and Morris, Illinois.

### **What projects are you currently working on?**

Chamlin has strong ties to Illinois, with strategic offices in Peru, Ottawa, and Morris, Illinois. We currently provide engineering services to over 40 municipalities in Bureau, Grundy, Henry, Kendall, LaSalle, Lee, Livingston, Marshall, Putnam, Tazewell, and Will Counties.

### **What project are you most proud of?**

We take pride in all our projects and our talented staff. As a full-service engineering firm, we are dedicated to enhancing communities through our diverse civil practices and value every project we undertake. One notable accomplishment is our Phase I and II engineering work for



**Chamlin & Associates**  
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the reconstruction of Plank Road in Peru, Illinois. This project included an intersection reconfiguration, implementing the first “Roundabout” in LaSalle County, Illinois. The multi-phased project extended improvements to I-80 that improved operations and safety at the I-80 and Plank Road north ramp intersection and provides access to a future commercial development that will become a major gathering point in northcentral Illinois.

Since 1952, Chamlin has aimed to create practical solutions that transform, inspire, and enrich the communities where we live and work for future generations. This project enabled us to design a cutting-edge layout that allows for the referenced future commercial development opportunities in Peru.

Our team conducted field surveys and traffic studies, prepared intersection design study drawings, designed water main and sewer main extensions, developed a Traffic Management Plan, and created a Project Development Report for local roads. We also prepared detailed construction plans and specifications.

### **What has been the biggest benefit of you joining ACEC-IL?**

Being a member of ACEC provides significant benefits to Chamlin by keeping us informed about the latest industry trends in the state and helping us monitor current and future projects. It also creates opportunities for regular interaction with the government agencies we collaborate with, allowing us to strengthen our professional relationships with clients. Additionally, ACEC-IL offers excellent networking opportunities with other leading firms in the industry, enabling us to build more diverse project teams to serve our clients better.

### **Why do you feel firms should join ACEC-IL?**

Membership in ACEC-IL allows firms, regardless of size, to work together effectively to enhance the industry and improve our region's transportation network. ACEC-IL is a strong advocate for all member firms, providing access to exceptional professional development opportunities and resources that benefit both employees and their organizations.

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## **Member Updates:**

### **AAA Engineering is excited to announce a dynamic shift in leadership.**

AAA Engineering is excited to announce a dynamic shift in leadership. Brian Castro, PE, and Shyam Raj are set to drive AAA’s ambitious growth trajectory. With 15 years of engineering expertise, Brian is poised to lead with precision as the firm’s new Chief Executive Officer. Shyam, bringing a fresh perspective from city planning along with 25 years of experience as a high level executive within the A/E industry, is eager to bring his expertise to the Chicagoland area AEC industry. Shyam is the firm’s new Chief Operating Officer.

Brian and Shyam are ready to navigate the competitive landscape of Illinois and the upper Midwest. Armed with innovative strategies and a relentless drive, they are prepared to grow AAA. Rachel Borenstein, the visionary founder of AAA Engineering, remains as Principal. She will continue to cultivate new relationships and serve clients.



## ENGINEERING ENTERPRISES, INC. PROMOTES TWO WITHIN THE MARKETING DEPARTMENT



Engineering Enterprises, Inc. (EEI), an award-winning civil engineering and land surveying firm, is pleased to announce the promotion of Angela Smith and Kristine Legler, two valued marketing department professionals.

For 28 years, Angie Smith has been an invaluable asset to EEI. She has shown exceptional dedication and expertise in marketing and business development, significantly contributing to EEI's growth. Her attention to detail, communication, leadership skills, and unwavering commitment to excellence have been instrumental in advancing the company's mission. In her new role as Director of Marketing and Business Development, Angie will continue to oversee the marketing department and lead EEI's business development processes.

In Kristine Legler's new role as Marketing Coordinator, Kristine will continue to support the Marketing Department with a focus on EEI's online presence, proposal development and brand promotion. Kristine has been with the firm for two and a half years. Her promotion demonstrates our strong belief in her capacity to grow and create content representative of EEI's core values.

"We are delighted to promote within our marketing team," said Jeff Freeman, PE, CFM, LEED AP, Chief Executive Officer. "Their exceptional skills and collaboration have greatly contributed to our firm's growth, and we look forward to their continued success in their new roles."

These two promotions underscore EEI's commitment to recognizing and fostering talent within the organization. As Angie and Kristine embark on this exciting new chapter, we are confident that they will continue to excel and contribute to our firm's growth and success.

For more information about EEI and our services, please visit [www.eeiweb.com](http://www.eeiweb.com).

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**ENGINEERING ENTERPRISES, INC. ANNOUNCES  
PROMOTION OF FOUR VALUED EMPLOYEES**





Engineering Enterprises, Inc. (EEI), an award-winning civil engineering and land surveying firm, is pleased to announce the promotion of four of our valued employees to new positions within the company.

**Jacob Seger, PE, CFM, CPII**, has been promoted to Senior Project Engineer II. He has been with the firm for seven years, working within the Transportation Group, and has consistently demonstrated growth as an engineering professional.

**Thomas Soelke** has been promoted to Senior Project Technician I. With two years at the company, Thomas has been an integral part of our Construction Group, contributing to various projects, including numerous lead service line replacement projects.

**Anthony Radomski** has been promoted to Senior Project Technician I. Over the past two years, Anthony has been a valuable member of our Construction Group, focusing on various underground-related projects, including numerous water main installations.

**Michael Agate** has continued to be a tremendous asset to the CAD Department for the past three years and has been promoted to Project Technician. His dedication and expertise have significantly contributed to the success of numerous projects.

We are confident that these employees will excel in their new roles and continue to contribute to the success of our company. Please join us in congratulating them on their well-deserved promotions.

For more information about EEI and our services, please visit [www.eeiweb.com](http://www.eeiweb.com).



## Healthy Politics Episode 10: How Healthcare is Driving Federal Debt and Shaping the Economy

LISTEN  
HERE

Healthy Politics is a series hosted by Holmes Murphy Compliance Director Nick Karls and Senior Advisor Den Bishop, focusing on healthcare-related topics in politics.



## Industrial Hygiene: Basics of Air Sampling & Noise Monitoring

Join Holmes Murphy on **Wednesday, April 16 at 10:30 a.m. CT** to learn about Industrial Hygiene Air Sampling and Noise Monitoring, focusing on identifying workplace hazards and strategies to enhance safety culture. *This webinar will be recorded and sent following the live webinar.*

[Register today.](#)



## Ethics for the Design Professional

Join Holmes Murphy Construction on **Thursday, April 17 at 12:00 p.m. CT** to explore the role of ethics in design professionals' daily decisions and gain practical tools to improve ethical decision-making. *This webinar will be recorded. This session qualifies for 1 CEU and is eligible for AXA XL Premium Education Credit for policy holders.*

[Register today.](#)



## **2025 Winter Coalitions Meeting- February in Phoenix**

The Winter Coalitions Meeting focuses on resiliency and sustainability, a crucial theme for engineering firms navigating today's dynamic environment. The meeting, scheduled February 25-26 at the Hyatt Regency Phoenix, gives attendees a unique opportunity to connect with peers and share best practices, explore challenges and solutions, and gain critical insights into evolving industry trends. All ACEC members are welcome to attend and can earn up to 4 PDHs. Register [here](#).



The **Small Firm Workshop** is scheduled February 22-23, also at the Hyatt Regency Phoenix. This workshop is taught by Stambaugh Ness and focuses on leadership development for both senior leaders and emerging talent in small firms. This comprehensive, hands-on workshop will focus on cultivating the next generation of leadership and offers up to 8 PDHs. Register [here](#).

# UPCOMING EVENTS...



**4.8.2025** - Webinar: *Navigating the Future: Insights from Emerging Engineering Professionals* - [Register here](#)

**4.14.2025 - 4.17.2025** - *OpenRoads Corridor Modeling Training, Springfield Session* - [Click here to learn how to register!](#)

**4.16.2025** - *ACEC IL Social Event at TopGolf* hosted by ACEC IL Emerging Professionals in Naperville, IL - [Register Here](#)

**4.17.2025** - *Practical Practices for Resident Engineers* - [Register Here](#)

**4.22.2025** - *Webinar: Tax Incentive Updates for Designers* - [Register Here](#)

**4.23.2025** - *Chicago City Agency Lookahead* - [Register Here](#)

**4.30.2025** - *2025 TFIC Lobby Day* - [Register here](#)

**6.3.2025** - *Spring Board Meeting & Luncheon* - [Save the Date](#)

**6.9.2025** - *Spring Golf Outing* - [Save the Date](#)

**11.18.2025 - 11.19.2025** - *ACEC IL Fall Conference* - [Save the Date](#)

#### Online Education Opportunities:

- Bystander Training and Manager Harassment Training - [Register here](#)
- Sexual Harassment Training - [Register here](#)
- Retention & Recruitment: A Webinar Series to Enhance the Employee Experience - [Register here](#)

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#### SUBMIT UPDATES & ARTICLES:

Please submit firm update & news articles by the 15th of each month to: [bethany@acecil.org](mailto:bethany@acecil.org) Articles and updates will be included in the membership newsletter, posted on our website, and shared through our social media feeds.

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