

KEVIN ARTL
PRESIDENT & CEO

LEADERSHIP & POLICY BRIEFING

JANUARY 2025

Tollway SAT Report: Strategic Moves



The Illinois Tollway's Stakeholder Advisory Team (SAT) has finalized a report with strategic recommendations to enhance regional mobility and technology. ACEC Illinois President and CEO Kevin Artl served on the Advisory Team.

Why it matters: The SAT's recommendations aim to improve customer service and agency performance while making significant regional contributions.

- These insights focus on clean air initiatives, equitable economic development, and mobility solutions.

Driving the news: The SAT, comprising 40 leaders from various sectors, has been providing guidance on the Tollway's long-term capital planning since April.

What they're saying: "We challenged the SAT to bring together their diverse voices and identify strategic investments needed to drive our region's future," said Illinois Tollway Executive Director Cassaundra Rouse. Board Member Scott Paddock added, "We are energized by the enthusiasm and collaboration reflected in the Stakeholder Advisory Team's work throughout this year."

What's next: The recommendations include pursuing new partnerships, expanding electric vehicle infrastructure, and exploring innovative toll pricing models.

- The Tollway plans to integrate these strategies into its next long-term capital program.

Go deeper: For a detailed look at the SAT report and the specific recommendations proposed, visit the [Illinois Tollway's official website](#) to access the full document and learn more about how these strategies will shape the region's transportation future.

Highway Construction Costs Dip in Spring 2024



The Federal Highway Administration [reported a slight decrease](#) in highway construction costs in Q2 2024, marking a brief relief amid a trend of rising expenses.

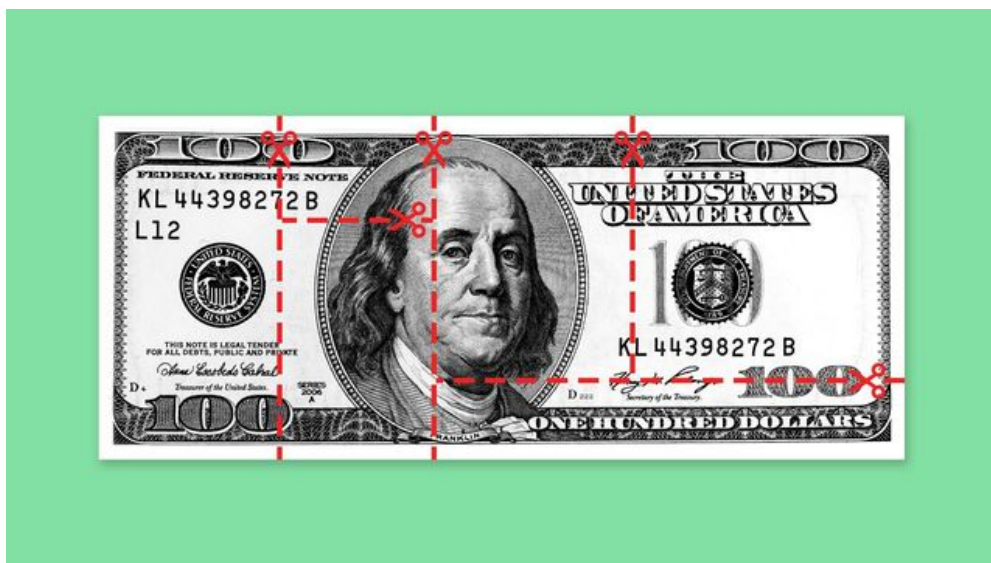
Why it matters: This drop, albeit small at 0.9%, offers a glimpse of potential stabilization after years of significant cost increases, which have impacted federal and state infrastructure budgets.

- Since the end of 2020, highway construction costs surged by 70%, challenging the buying power of federal-aid programs.

By the numbers: The NHCCI shows a 0.9% quarterly drop, translating to a 3.7% annualized rate. However, since 2020, the federal government lost \$61.5 billion in spending value on roads and bridges due to increased costs.

Go deeper: The [full report by the FHWA](#) includes a detailed analysis of cost factors, such as asphalt and concrete, and the economic implications of these shifts. Visit the FHWA website for detailed charts and comparisons with other economic indices.

GOP Faces Hurdles in Slashing Infrastructure Funds



A recent [GOP memo](#) indicates that Congress likely can't cut certain infrastructure law programs to fund tax cuts or other GOP priorities, such as border security.

Why it matters: This development poses a challenge to the GOP's strategy to reduce what they consider wasteful spending from the 2021 infrastructure law.

- The memo, from the House Transportation Committee's GOP staff, highlights that reducing \$184 billion in emergency DOT funds won't generate direct savings due to budget scoring methods.

The big picture: The GOP aims to leverage the reconciliation process for their key policies, including tax reforms and border fortification, but funding these remains uncertain.

Yes, but: Senate Democrats might argue that reversing this spending violates the [Byrd rule](#), further complicating GOP efforts.

Join IDOT's Bridge Bundling Webinars



Illinois Department
of Transportation

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) invites engineering and construction firms to participate in webinars focused on the Off-System Bridge Bundling Program.

Why it matters: These webinars provide a platform for potential stakeholders to understand the program, ask questions, and learn about important dates.

- [The Industry Webinar](#) is scheduled for January 21, 2025, from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM.
- [The DBE Webinar](#) is on January 31, 2025, from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM.
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What's next: Interested firms can register by clicking the links above. A recording will be available for those unable to attend live.

- These sessions are an opportunity to engage with IDOT experts and gain insights into the bridge bundling process.

Illinois Ushers in 300 New Laws for 2025



Starting January 1, 2025, Illinois implements around 300 new laws, spanning workplace regulations, road safety, and AI technology.

Why it matters: These changes cover a wide variety of industry sectors and areas of regulation.

- Minimum wage: Rises to \$15 per hour for adults, fulfilling a gradual increase plan by Gov. JB Pritzker.
- Salary transparency: Requires employers with 15+ employees to disclose pay scales in job postings, reducing wage bias.
- Child labor laws: Strengthen penalties for violations and limit employers' ability to hold mandatory anti-union meetings.

AI regulations: Prohibit AI-generated child pornography and unauthorized digital replicas in the entertainment industry, safeguarding legal interests.

Road safety laws: Introduce digital driver's licenses and expand obligations for drivers to yield to emergency vehicles.

For a deep dive on Illinois' new laws: [click here](#), and [here](#), and [here](#).



[Cast Your Vote](#)

The Engineering Works Award is voted for by you! Please take the time to look through this year's Engineering Excellence Honor Awards and then help select the best infrastructure project in Illinois.

Everyone can vote once with online voting concluding at the Engineering Excellence Awards Gala. The winner of the Engineering Works award will be announced at the gala.

ACEC Illinois Committee Member Spotlight:



William E. Klingner, P.E., CFM
Water Resources Services/Treasurer
Klingner & Associates, P.C.

1. How long have you been a part of ACEC IL? I have been a part of ACEC-IL in some capacity since I received my P.E. license in 2014. I was lucky to have my Dad, Mike Klingner, as a mentor who was able to get me very involved with ACEC from a young age.

2. What position(s) have you held within the ACEC-IL organization? I am currently the Committee Chair for the ACEC-IL US Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island Committee. I am also a Member of the Finance Committee. In 2021 I was honored to have received the ACEC-IL and ACEC National Young Professional of the Year Awards.

3. Tell us a little bit about the committee you chair. The US Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island Committee is

important for all members and member firms who are interested in the pursuit of large Federal Works

Projects. With our nation's aging infrastructure (particularly river and waterway infrastructure), there has been a renewed interest, and increased funding, for large Federal Construction Projects within the Rock Island District. This includes a strong emphasis on the Mississippi, Illinois, and Missouri Rivers. In our committee we discuss upcoming USACE design and construction contracts, construction schedules, new and updated regulations and design criteria, and make key introductions to US Army Corps staff.

4. What's the number one reason people should join your committee? Investment in our nation's infrastructure is at an all time high. We have a once in a generation opportunity to develop and execute key projects that will sustain our nation for decades to come. If you want to find out how to be part of these exciting projects, joining our committee is a good start. Also, I hear they have an excellent Committee Chair.

5. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? In what little spare time I have, I enjoy running, playing board games, and golfing. My wife golfed collegetly, so I guess I like being humbled. I also enjoy spending time with my three daughters Hattie (7), Matilda (4), and Bea (1).

6. Tell us one fun fact about yourself. When I was growing up, my family would take epically long road trips across the County. In an 11 year span, from ages 4 to 15, I visited all 50 states, driving to all but California, Hawaii, and Alaska. I hope to do something similar with my kids... although maybe not quite so ambitious.

Member Updates:

Oates Associates IT Director Randy Roth to Retire

Collinsville, IL– Oates Associates is bidding farewell to and celebrating the remarkable tenure of IT Director Randy Roth, who will retire at the end of 2024 following an exceptional 37-year career with the company.



Randy joined Oates Associates in 1987 as a CADD technician, and over the years, his role evolved with his strengths. He transitioned into the IT world due to his experience managing software and his drive to support people and systems. Randy helped usher the firm through new programs and technologies, system upgrades, and other IT enhancements. His versatility, commitment, and expertise have made him an integral part of the Oates team.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to Randy for his years of hard work and dedication to Oates Associates. We wish him all the best as he embarks on this well-deserved next chapter in life.

Oates Associates is a 100% employee-owned multi-disciplined design firm with offices in Collinsville and Belleville, Illinois and St. Louis and St. Charles, Missouri. Oates provides engineering and surveying services for transportation and building projects. Specifically, this includes transportation and traffic engineering, ADA transition planning, stormwater management, site design, building and bridge structural design and inspections, surveying and drone operations. For more information, visit www.oatesassociates.com or call 618.345.2200.

ENGINEERING ENTERPRISES, INC. EXPANDS TEAM WITH FIVE NEW HIRES



Engineering Enterprises, Inc. (EEI), a leading civil engineering and land surveying firm, is proud to announce the hiring of five talented new team members. This expansion reinforces EEI's commitment to growth and excellence in providing outstanding service to every client every day. The new hires include Cornelio Estrella, Charlie Gambs, Glenn Fowler, Angela Driessen, and Sarah Lasfalk.

"We are thrilled to welcome Cornelio, Charlie, Glenn, Angela, and Sarah to our team as we near the end of our 50th anniversary year," said Brad Sanderson, PE, Chief Operating Officer / President. "Each of them will be instrumental in our continued delivery of innovative solutions and exceptional service to our clients." The two new CAD technicians, Angela Driessen and Sarah Lasfalk, bring a combined 25-plus years of experience in computer-aided design, enhancing the firm's capacity for precise and efficient project design. Driessen holds her B.S. in Civil Engineering from Universidad Pontificia Bolivarian and her M.S. in Industrial and Systems Engineering from Northern Illinois University. Lasfalk graduated from the College of DuPage with an Associates in Art and also has an Architectural 2D CAD Certificate.

The construction technician, Glenn Fowler, will add valuable on-site expertise and is currently attending Waubensee Community College working towards a B.S. in Civil Engineering. While the survey technician, Charlie Gambs, strengthens our land surveying capabilities. Gambs is a graduate of North Central College with a BBA in Business Administration and Management. The addition of Cornelio Estrella, EI, as a new project engineer further bolsters our ability to manage complex projects from conception to completion. Estrella is a graduate of the Illinois Institute of Technology with a B.S. in Civil Engineering with Environmental specialization who will be working in our Municipal Group. These new hires represent our ongoing investment in the future as we enter the next 50 years. We remain committed to fostering talent and pushing the boundaries of innovation in civil engineering and land surveying.

About Engineering Enterprises, Inc.

Engineering Enterprises, Inc. (EEI), founded in 1974, is an award-winning consulting engineering firm providing services to public agencies and private entities throughout northern Illinois. Over 75 experienced firm members including licensed professional civil engineers, land surveyors, and support team members provide a full range of services for planning, design, and construction of infrastructure projects, funding assistance, and municipal consulting. Our core values guide our staff on every project from initiation through completion keeping us committed to quality, service, and value for our clients. By offering outstanding service to every client every day we are able to assist with bettering the communities in which we serve. For additional information visit our website at www.eeiweb.com.

Unmasking the Invisible: Indoor Air Quality's Impact on Health

Join us on this insightful episode of the Engineering Office Podcast, presented by the American Council of Engineering Companies, as we explore the critical importance of indoor air quality. Our special guest,



Randi Huckaby from CAMFIL, shares valuable insights into air pollution control in both commercial and industrial spaces.

Through this conversation, we delve into the various causes of indoor air pollution and its potential health impacts. Moreover, Randi highlights the significant role of engineering firms and CAMFIL's expertise in developing solutions that meet regulatory standards and ensure a healthy work environment.

Whether it's new construction or retrofitting existing facilities, CAMFIL is at the forefront of helping engineer companies design optimal air filtration systems, equipped to handle complex particulate matter challenges.

Discover how involving experts from the onset can pave the way for safer, cleaner indoor spaces.

Listen [HERE](#)



ACEC national members are eligible to join the specialty groups known as ACEC Coalitions — dedicated communities of ACEC members organized by practice area or firm size. The coalitions provide a range of practical, day-to-day resources to enhance the operation of your business and make it more profitable by sharing knowledge and best practices with peers in your area of specialization.

Visit [HERE](#)



Thursday, February 27, 2025
HYATT REGENCY O'HARE CHICAGO
9300 Bryn Mawr Ave.
Rosemont, IL 60018

6:00pm Cocktail Hour
7:00pm Awards
Merit Awards
Special Achievement Awards
8:00pm Served Dinner
9:00pm Awards
Honor Awards
Judges Choice
Engineering Works
Outstanding Graphic
Mentor of the Year
Firm of the Year
Emerging Professional of the Year
Lincolns Grand Conceptor
10:00pm After Party

Registration is OPEN



OnDemand: Virtual Webinar: Illinois Sexual Harassment Training - [Register Here](#)

1.14.25 Webinar: Next Gen Revolution: Multigenerational Leadership - [Webinar](#)

2025 Executive Leadership Institute Agenda - [Registration HERE](#)

1.21.25 Webinar: Congressional Look Ahead - [Registration HERE](#)

1.22.25 Social Event at Flight Club - [Registration HERE](#)

1/29/25 - 2/26/25 Retention & Recruitment - A Webinar Series to Enhance the Employee Experience - [Registration HERE](#)

Open Roads Corridor Modeling Training [Details Here](#)

2.11.25 Webinar: Business Development in the Built Environment [Registration HERE](#)

2.27.25 2025 Engineering Excellence Awards - [Registration HERE](#)

3.8.25 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament - [Save the Date](#)

3.12.25 Dogwood Social House: Emerging Professional Mixer - [Save the Date](#)

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

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

"Engineering Works" Podcast

Engineering Works is powered by the ACEC of Illinois. We will be featuring the innovators, creators, designers, and engineers who are making engineering work in Illinois and reshaping our state.

[Listen Here](#)



SUBMIT UPDATES & ARTICLES:

Please submit firm update & news articles by the 15th of each month to: 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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