



2022 December
NEWSLETTER:
THE CONNECTOR



LEADERSHIP & POLICY BRIEFING

ACEC ILLINOIS PRESIDENT & CEO - KEVIN ARTL

House and Senate Republicans Elect New Leaders

House



State Representative Tony McCombie, from Savanna in northwest Illinois, was named the new GOP leader after the caucus' current leader, Rep. Jim Durkin, of Western Springs, announced he would not seek another term in that office following November's elections.

McCombie's 89th Illinois House district covers much of northwest Illinois, stretching from the Mississippi River to Genoa south of Freeport and Rockford. The district consists of all or parts of Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, Jo Davies, Ogle, Stephenson and Winnebago counties.

Representative Durkin, a strong advocate of REBUILD Illinois and friend of ACEC Illinois, will continue to serve in the legislature.

Senate

The Illinois Senate Republicans unanimously selected Senator John Curran as their leader for the 103rd General Assembly on Tuesday.

In his own statement, Curran said that the caucus stands ready, "with our focus directed toward the future, on developing solutions that will address the critical issues facing our state."

Curran, a Republican from southwest suburban Downers Grove, has served in the General Assembly since 2017. Curran succeeds Senator Dan McConchie in the role as Senate Republican Leader. McConchie, like Curran, supported REBUILD Illinois and has been a strong advocate for the industry.



State Update

The Illinois General Assembly adjourned their second week of veto session last week. The Senate has published their [spring calendar](#). The Senate will return for "lame duck" session of the 102nd General Assembly on Wednesday, January 4th, and plans to adjourn the 103rd General Assembly on May 19th.

Federal Update

Congress voted to impose the tentative agreement reached earlier this year between railroads and union leadership, which some unions have rejected. By imposing the contract, a railroad strike is averted. A companion bill to impose paid sick leave for union members failed in the Senate, though had bipartisan support. [More](#)

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee met to hear about the IIJA rollout. Senator Shelley Moore raised her concerns again that the administration is prioritizing maintenance over new projects without the legislative language to provide them with that authority. At the hearing, David Bauer, CEO of the American Road and Transportation Builders Association, noted the economic benefits expected to result from the IIJA and that "the key takeaway from the first year of the IIJA is that the law is working as intended." [More](#)

Rep. Sam Graves, the presumptive House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman for the 118th Congress, told Roll Call he plans to keep tight oversight of the implementation of the IIJA, noting his concerns about prioritization of maintenance over new build projects. Updates to the permitting process are also among his priorities. [More](#)

IDOT Begins Transportation Revenue Study with Statewide Hearings

As electric vehicle (EV) ownership grows across Illinois, the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act directed the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to determine how this trend will impact future transportation revenue. The study will explore how the increasing share of EVs in the vehicle fleet will affect the future of motor fuel tax revenues, the options available to policymakers to address declining fuel tax receipts, and initial stakeholder understanding, preferences, and concerns about revenue options. Study outcomes will include an estimated revenue impact analysis of the increasing adoption of EVs and more fuel-efficient vehicles, and a planning-level evaluation of alternatives to motor fuel taxes, informed by stakeholder input on important evaluation criteria.

ACEC Illinois will be participating in these stakeholder meetings.

States Considering VMTs

[Michigan](#) and [North Carolina](#) lawmakers are considering a vehicle-miles traveled program to close the future funding gap anticipated as more drivers choose zero emission vehicles. Neither state has taken concrete steps and policymakers and advocates in both states

acknowledged the challenge of public opposition to being tracked.

Chicago DOT Adds Staff to Improve Payment Cycle

Chicago DOT has added additional staff this month to help expedite its payment process. ACEC IL has raised the extended payment cycle with both CDOT and the Mayor's Office and we appreciate the collaboration from both to work towards a long-term solution. ACEC IL will continue meeting with CDOT to discuss potential process changes and other efficiencies to the system.

IDOT Adds Bureau Chief of Innovative Project Delivery

Mr. Michael Stirk will be appointed as the Bureau Chief of Innovative Project Delivery in the Office of Planning and Programming, for the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Mr. Stirk is a graduate of Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston, Massachusetts, where he received his Bachelor's in Civil Engineering. He joins the Department with over 35 years of engineering and alternative delivery experience.

Thanks,
Kevin Artl
President and CEO
American Council of Engineering Companies of Illinois



REMINDER

All feedback and comments for the IDOT OpenBridge Environment Industry Evaluation are due December 19th, 2022.

COMMITTEE CHAIR SPOTLIGHT



Chris Linneman
IDOT Bridge Committee Chair
Project Manager at EFK Moen

How long have you been a part of ACEC IL?
Since 2008

What position(s) have you held within the ACEC-IL organization?
IDOT Bridge Committee Chair

Tell us a little bit about the committee you chair.

The IDOT Bridge Committee has around 90 members, typically one member from each firm who does bridge work for IDOT. We meet with IDOT semi-annually and every other year organize the ACEC-IL / IDOT Bridge Seminar. Regular meeting discussions typically center around new and upcoming policy updates from the Bureau of Bridges & Structures. The committee meetings are usually well attended by several IDOT bridge employees who give updates on their respective specialties and are a great opportunity to network with both IDOT staff and other consultants.

What's the number one reason people should join your committee?
To connect with other bridge engineers across the state and stay up to date on the latest bridge news.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Hiking and biking. I just returned from a trip out to New Mexico and Arizona with the family where we spent Thanksgiving week hiking around Sedona.

Tell us one fun fact about yourself.

Me, my wife, and kids are working on visiting all 50 states. We just crossed off #23 and #24 with the vacation mentioned above.

MEMBER FIRM SPOTLIGHT



ENGINEERING | PLANNING | ALLIED SERVICES

How long have you been in the engineering industry?

Hanson was founded in 1954 — 68 years ago — by Walter E. Hanson and two civil engineers in Springfield, Illinois. The trio focused on bridge design and structural engineering projects in the Midwest. Today, we are an employee-owned consulting firm that provides engineering, planning and allied services for clients and projects worldwide from our headquarters in Springfield and 29 offices nationwide and in Canada.

What projects are you currently working on?

We continue to lead the efforts on the Springfield Rail Improvements Project, a \$475 million project that consolidates rail corridors within Springfield and reduces the number of at-grade crossings from 68 to 32. It involves the construction of eight new underpasses and one overpass, as well as the reconstruction of four existing underpasses. The Federal Railroad Administration has highlighted it as an example of a successful federally funded rail project. As part of this significant project, Hanson is providing design services for the Springfield-Sangamon County Transportation Center.

Our company is also the lead design engineer for BNSF's Sandpoint Junction Connector, a recently opened, mile-long bridge that crosses Lake Pend Oreille in Sandpoint, Idaho. The goal for this project is to keep train traffic moving, reduce congestion and improve commerce throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Additionally, we're working on the following projects: commissioning services at a new consulate complex in Hyderabad, India, for the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations; inspection services for 48 U.S. Marine Corps towers in Arizona and California; siting, land acquisition and construction management services for Ameren's advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) system throughout Illinois; design-corridor management services for the Illinois Tollway, including the master planning of Interstate 294 from 95th Street to Balmoral Avenue in Cook and DuPage counties; Smart City applications for Distillery Lab in Peoria; corridor project development and environment study and reconstruction for State Road 26 in Newberry, Florida, for the Florida Department of Transportation; an energy roadmap for John F. Kennedy International Airport's Terminal 4 in Queens, New York; maintenance and capital improvement project planning with the Nueces County Water Control and Improvement

District #3 in Texas; and work for Meadowdale Beach Park's estuary restoration in Snohomish County, Washington.

What project are you most proud of?

We're proud of our work on the Springfield Rail Improvements Project, which also has led to the creation and development of the Grow Our Own Minority Participation Program. Sensing a need in our community, our company collaborated with the city of Springfield and Sangamon County to sponsor a program that helps develop minority talent and expand access to educational and career opportunities in science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics. Our goal is to have the students in this program obtain college degrees in these fields and start their careers in Springfield.

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

The biggest benefit has been the opportunity to collaborate with ACEC-IL and other member firms to focus on and champion issues that affect not only our company but our industry and country. Because our business is part of a regulation-driven industry, the advocacy, networking and legislative focus ACEC-IL provides is invaluable.

Why do you feel firms should join ACEC-IL?

There are so many benefits to joining ACEC-IL, but important ones to consider include legislative, advocacy and lobbying activities, leadership and volunteer opportunities and networking and relationship-building. As ACEC Senior Vice President for Advocacy Steve Hall recently said in a Last Word blog post, "We've had success in moving legislation this past year through teamwork and the grassroots engagement of ACEC's membership. Advocates have the opportunity to advance good ideas that make a difference in people's lives."



Sergio "Satch" Pecori, P.E., Hanson's chairman and CEO, spoke during the Oct. 5 ribbon-cutting ceremony for the underpasses for Fifth and Sixth streets in Springfield, Illinois. The structures are part of the Springfield Rail Improvements Project. Highlighting the collaboration among the city, county, federal and state agencies, railroads and contractors, Satch said, "We've all worked together as a team to make sure we could deliver this project on time."

UPCOMING EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE



ADVOCACY



EDUCATIONAL



BUSINESS



ACEC Illinois Holiday Reception with IDOT Secretary Omer Osman

December 13, 2022 | 6:00p.m.-9:00p.m.

Location: The Drake
2301 York Road
Oak Brook, IL 60523

Register [Here](#)



Webinar: Going "Deep" on Subs

December 14, 2022 | 12p.m.

Host: Meghan Milewski of Farnsworth Group

Register [Here](#)

*Complimentary for all ACEC Illinois Members



Virtual: Remote Leadership

January 12, 2023 | 11a.m.-12p.m.

Presenter: Jeff Gross of Gro-Nova
ACEC Illinois Member: \$75
Nonmember: \$150

Register [Here](#)



Webinar: Mindfulness in Consulting Part II

January 18, 2023 | 12p.m.

Host: Hick Halan of HLR

Register [Here](#)

*Complimentary for all ACEC Illinois Members

Webinar: Lifelong Learning: how to engage, teach & be taught

February 15, 2023 | 12p.m.

Host: Eamon Homedi of Atlas Engineering



Register [Here](#)

*Complimentary for all ACEC Illinois Members



Save the Date: Engineering Excellence Awards

February 16, 2022

Location: Hyatt Regency O'Hare Chicago
9300 Bryn Mawr Avenue
Rosemont, IL 60018



Webinar: Designing to Standards - Where do they Come From

March 15, 2023 | 12p.m.

Host: Josh Starzyk of Gannett Fleming

Register [Here](#)

*Complimentary for all ACEC Illinois Members

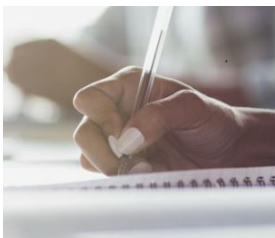


Topgolf Networking Event

Hosted by: Emerging Professionals Committee

April 11, 2023 | 5:30p.m.-7:30p.m.

Location: Topgolf Naperville
3211 Odyssey Court
Naperville, IL 60563



Webinar: An Introduction to Project Management in Consulting

April 12, 2023 | 12p.m.

Host: Mohamad Alsharbini of Benesch

Register [Here](#)

*Complimentary for all ACEC Illinois Members

VIRTUAL: BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN TRAINING

HOSTED BY:
ACEC
Illinois

PRESENTER:



Carlos A. Feliciano, P.E.
In-House Studies Unit Head / ADA & Bicycle Coordinator

This presentation includes a summary of IDOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations policy. The training will go into detail on policies, warrants, design considerations and proper documentation practices for inclusion of active transportation facilities in State led roadway improvements in compliance with IDOT's Complete Streets policy.

PRESENTED BY:



To request a recording of:

1. Email bethany@acecil.org
2. Be emailed an invoice for \$45.
3. Then, you will be emailed a video recording and PDH.

RECORDING OF: ENGINEERING WITH LAND ACQUISITION IN MIND

About:

This virtual seminar not a webinar to teach someone how to do land acquisition, but rather a tool for engineers that might have land acquisition on their projects.

PRESENTERS:

Jeni Lyon, President/CEO, HLR Inc.
Carlos Feliciano, IDOT Programming, In-House Studies Unit Head
Kari Smith, IDOT Design, Economic Analysis Coordinator
Brian Bottomley, Owner/Senior Engineering, Way Maker Transportation, Planning and Engineering
Chris Maloney, IDOT Land Acquisition, Area Relocation and Property Management Supervisor
Reid Magner, Vice President, Bravo Company Engineer

Agenda:

Guidelines
Overview of Process
Acquisition Timeline
Phase I - ROW Determination & Consideration
Phase II - Land Acquisition Process
Examples

1. Email bethany@acecil.org
2. Be emailed an invoice for \$150.
3. Be emailed a 3 hour video and PDH's



RECORDING OF: EMPLOYEE RETENTION - STAY INTERVIEWS GREAT RESIGNATION TO THE GREAT RETENTION

INTERACTIVE - INFORMATIVE - INSPIRING

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

- Stay Interview - vs - Exit Interview
- The Power of a Stay Interview
- How to do a Stay Interview
- What to Ask
- Dry Run

PRESENTER:



JEFF GROSS
FOUNDER, CHIEF EMPOWERMENT OFFICER
AND LEADERSHIP CONSULTANT



HOSTED BY:
ACEC
Illinois

TO REQUEST A RECORDING OF:

- EMAIL BETHANY@ACECIL.ORG
- BE EMAILED AN INVOICE FOR \$75.
- THEN, YOU WILL BE EMAILED A VIDEO RECORDING AND PDH

UPCOMING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Click Here: [Committee Meeting Schedule \(acecil.org\)](https://www.acecil.org/committee-meeting-schedule)

Please contact Emily Martinez, Director of Membership, for committee meeting details: emily@acecil.org

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Jeffrey Rensing to Lead Oates Associates as CEO



COLLINSVILLE (December 5, 2022) – Oates Associates, Inc. is pleased to announce that Jeffrey Rensing, PE, SE has been appointed the new chief executive officer of the company effective January 2, 2023. Current CEO Joseph Hagerty is retiring at the end of the year after three decades of leadership. He will remain on the company's board of directors.

Rensing recently marked his 25th anniversary with the company this past November. He began at Oates as an intern, joining full-time upon graduation from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville with a master's and bachelor's degree in civil engineering. With an eagerness to learn and an innate drive to help others, he has experienced every aspect of operations at Oates. He has extensive experience in roadway and structure planning and design with knowledge in building inspections and repairs – including fall protection, ADA transition planning, stormwater management and construction administration. Rensing grew into management and leadership positions due to his strengths as a mentor and visionary.

He joined the corporate management team in 2006, opening the St. Louis office and working alongside leadership to provide strategic insight and direction into Oates' mission, vision and operations. Rensing was identified as the firm's next CEO because of his natural ability to lead. He brings a mindset for the future, a solution-focused approach and an ability to inspire.

"Jeff has a unique combination of good business sense and strong engineering judgement. He has the ability to see the forest through the trees. He is the right leader for Oates Associates and I look forward to watching the firm continue to grow under his leadership," said Hagerty.

Bruce Schopp, PE, SE, president and chief operating officer added, "I have worked side-by-side with Jeff his entire career and his abilities never cease to amaze me. He naturally rose to the top and his skills and vision give me great confidence in his ability to lead and grow the firm. I'm excited to be a part of his success."

Rensing will assume the role alongside Schopp. Working closely with Rensing and Schopp will be firm principals Michael Busch, PE, PTOE; Thomas Cissell, PE, PTOE, LEED AP BD+C; and Steven Keil, PE, PLS. This team has worked with one another for over 20 years and will continue to lead the firm in its strategic direction.

"I am honored and very fortunate to have the opportunity to lead such a great group of people. Through their efforts and dedication, Oates Associates has experienced continued growth, and I am excited to continue this trend moving forward. The support I have received from our entire staff through this transition has been a great source of inspiration, and I look

forward to working with Bruce Schopp and the entire team to build on the foundation established by founder David Oates and the leadership of Joe Hagerty,” said Rensing.

In the firm’s 42 year history, Rensing is the second CEO.

About Oates Associates:

Oates Associates is a 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.

Professional Liability Trends

Professional Liability Claim Trends

Increase in the number and severity of PL claims over the last 12 months. Core issues include staff shortages, high workloads, communication, lack of mentoring & QA/QC, and rapidly changing project dynamics (from high employee turnover and a sharp rise in acquisitions). AE firms are encouraged to set boundaries, communicate well, and use their ability to walk away.

- **Communication (Texting):** Use **email** instead of texting client communications. In litigation, the texting is not good, as it can be sloppy and ambiguous. It tends to draw all conversation (not just project-related) into the court. Recommend texting, "I just sent you an email."
- **ADA Claims on the Rise** – We are seeing Law Firms driving large ADA lawsuits with success.
 - Long COVID is now a protected disability
 - [Website vulnerability](#) – Websites are now required to be ADA compliant.
- **Residential/Apartments Claims on the Rise** – **Apartments are starting to outpace condos on claims.**
 - #1 Driver is Scope Creep – Firms should be creating ways to track this and educating staff on how to handle it.
 - Delay-driven claims rising (especially around material shortages)
 - Environmental claims from mold (excluded on most PL policies)
 - Resilience as conditions change.
 - **Way to Reduce Risk:** Upfront and well documented communication, well-defined scope, and training of staff to stay within scope
- **Roads & Infrastructure Claim Types Expanding** – Municipalities have immunities, and the Architect/Engineer becomes the default "pocket." Fatalities, high impact/profile injuries, property damages are drawing nuclear verdicts.
- **Cyber & Tech** – War in Ukraine has driven ransomware down temporarily. **The targets for Cyber-attacks are becoming small and medium size firms**, due to the robust defenses being implemented at the larger organizations.
- **Problematic Contract Terms**
 - Indemnity Provision – Use of the work "work" is causing issues. Lack of negotiation ability for firms. Choice of Law State MATTERS for indemnity.
 - Arbitration/Litigation – Courts are backed up and arbitration/litigation is becoming very expensive. Judges are less patient and tolerant.
 - Future Documents use/reliance by clients



Welcome

Michael Baker
INTERNATIONAL

James LeVan, PE, PTOE, Senior Project Manager

James brings over 30 years of experience in highway design, traffic engineering and project management. He has a broad range of experience from large intersections to major highways to rail grade crossings and traffic studies. This experience includes managing both Phase I and II projects for the City of Chicago, Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Tollway and many of the collar counties and municipalities.

James was the lead engineer for the Critical Grade Crossing task on the Chicago to St Louis High Speed Rail Project. He has led the design of numerous highway/freeway corridor studies for IDOT and CDOT, the widening and reconstruction of numerous Illinois Tollway projects, and has served as lead highway engineer for dozens of rail crossings with adjacent intersections.

James is an Illinois licensed Professional Engineer and Professional Traffic Operations Engineer. His education includes a B.S., Civil Engineering - Structural, Purdue University and M.Eng., Engineering Management, University of Idaho.

We Make a Difference

Achieve. Fully

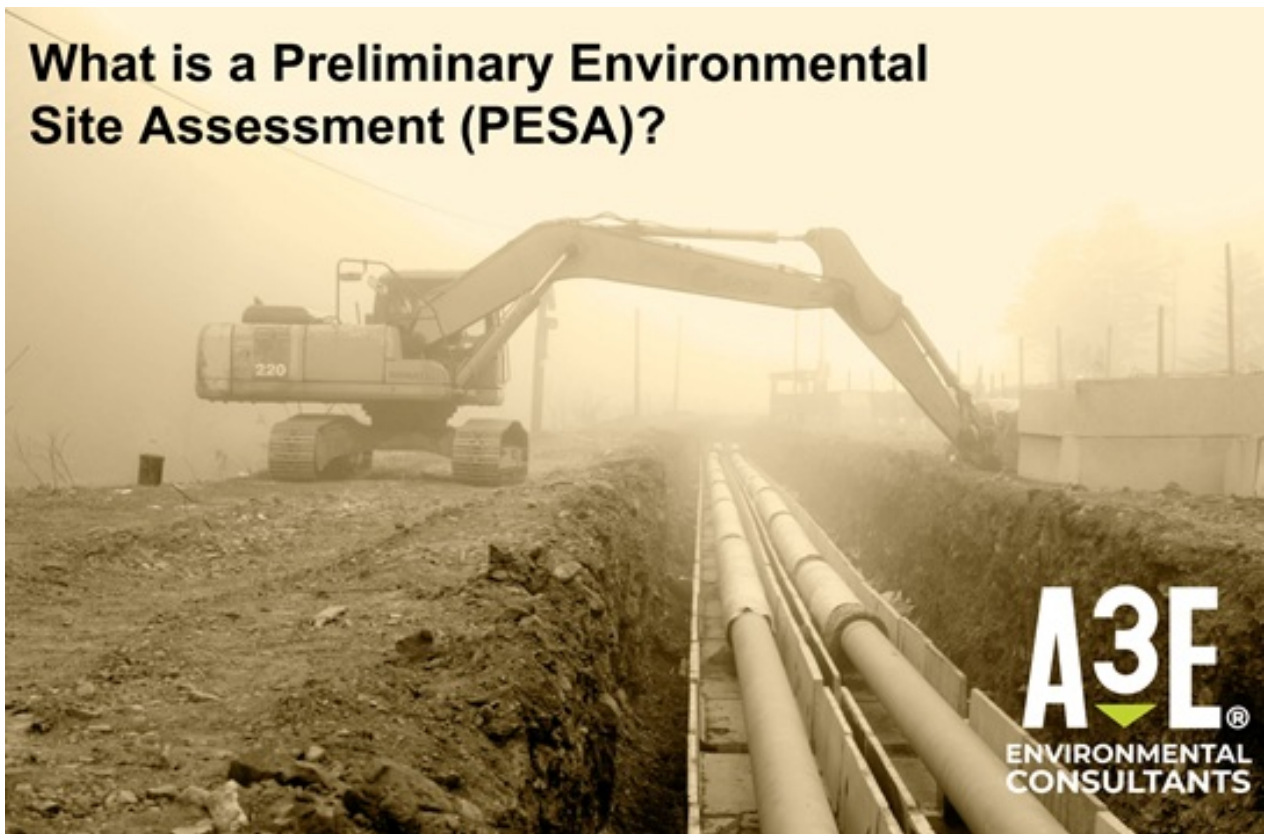


Promote health. Protect prosperity. Help others become their best selves. That's our approach to risk management and benefits consulting – and it's how we bring more sincerity to insurance. Because at Holmes Murphy, we believe enabling others to experience success in life is something worth celebrating to its fullest.

Paula Dixon
Senior Vice President/Shareholder



What is a Preliminary Environmental Site Assessment (PESA)?



A Preliminary Environmental Site Assessment (PESA) is the exact same as a **Phase 1 ESA** only instead of the investigation being done on a particular commercial property, it's performed on a corridor of Rights of Way (ROW). Essentially it's a long and narrow Phase 1 ESA which seeks to find all the possible environmental impacts along the corridor which is being assessed. If you're with a financial lending institution looking for a Preliminary ESA, you are most likely looking for a **Transaction Screen Assessment (TSA)** which can be found by clicking through the link. They are frequently mistaken for PESA.

Before we get too deep, you should check out this post describing what a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment. It will give you a good base of understanding about PESA's.

Read Full Article [Here](#)

How Airports Transform Communities into Development Districts



[LISTEN HERE](#)

Celebrating the One-Year Anniversary of the IIJA



[LISTEN HERE](#)

FALL 2022

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FURRY FRIENDS

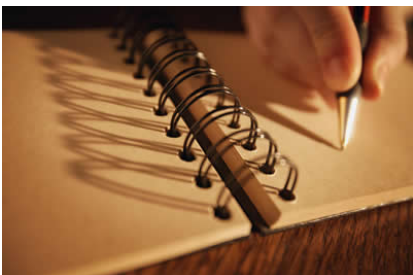
#ACECILPETS



We would love to see your furry coworkers!

Tag us in your posts:

#ACECILPETS



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.

Website: www.acecil.org

ACEC-Illinois | 5221 S 6th Street Road, Suite 120, Springfield, IL 62703

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