



**KEVIN ARTL**  
PRESIDENT & CEO

## LEADERSHIP & POLICY BRIEFING

### *Governor Signs Budget-Key Wins for Infrastructure ACEC Illinois Initiatives Become Law*



ACEC Illinois' advocacy team worked hard under the Capitol dome this session to not only protect current infrastructure funding, but to increase investment, create new programs and streamline processes.

*ACEC Illinois had some key wins in this year's budget and legislative session, including:*

- Expansion of QBS to now cover land acquisition services for IDOT, Tollway and CDB
- Illinois' first-ever student loan assistance program for Illinois college engineering graduates who work for IDOT
- \$300 million to IDOT for the I-290/Blue Line Modernization Project
- A fourfold increase in the IDOT Township Bridge Program from \$15 million to \$60 million

Overall, the Fiscal Year 2024 General Funds budget plan reflects projected revenues of \$50.611 billion and expenditures of \$50.428 billion, resulting in a \$183 million surplus.

## Capital and Transportation Budget Highlights

- Includes funding to support IIJA programming, as the State anticipates receiving at least \$18.0 billion over five years through federal formula funding; over \$7.2 billion in infrastructure funding has been announced for Illinois investments since IIJA's passage
- Features \$4.6 billion for the FY24 Road Program. This includes approximately \$3.4 billion in pay-as-you-go revenue and \$1.2 billion in bond funds.
- Reappropriates \$100 million at DCEO for community-driven broadband expansion to help close the digital divide.
- Supports the IIJA lead service line replacement loans at \$230.2 million, as well as \$10 million in new IEPA funding to provide lead service line inventory and planning grants to communities around the state.
- Reappropriates \$86 million in funding for orphaned well plugging from Rebuild Illinois and IIJA
- Reappropriates \$70 million from Rebuild Illinois at IEPA for transportation electrification and charging infrastructure statewide
- Provides an increase to RTA Operating Assistance Grants \$18 million
- Provides an additional \$1.5 million for RTA reduced fares
- Provides an additional \$5 million for Amtrak operating assistance for state-supported routes

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## Illinois' First-Ever Student Loan Repayment Assistance for Engineers Becomes Law

*ACEC Illinois Initiative Designed to Assist IDOT Recruit and Retain New Engineers*



Illinois' first-ever student loan assistance program targeted to engineering students working at the Illinois Department of Transportation has become law with **Governor JB Pritzker's** support and approval. The measure, sponsored by **State Senator Ram Villivalam** and supported by the **American Council of Engineering Companies of Illinois (ACEC Illinois)** creates a pilot program enabling the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to provide student loan repayment

assistance to qualifying employees that meet certain requirements, helping to attract and encourage educated professionals to work on the state's highest priority infrastructure projects.

"The inclusion of funding in the budget gives Illinois a competitive advantage when it comes to recruiting and retaining engineering talent and ensures that IDOT attracts educated professionals to work on our state's road and transportation infrastructure," said **Kevin Artl**, **President and CEO of the American Council of Engineering Companies of Illinois**.

"The promise of ReBuild Illinois can only be realized when we have the best professionals working on our infrastructure projects," said **Sen. Ram Villivalam**. "The provision of incentives to attract the engineers to our state is a key element in ensuring the success of that promise and I will continue to work with my colleagues and other stakeholders on more initiatives to attract the best engineers so that the state's infrastructure projects are delivered to the highest professional standards."

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## Congress Reaches Debt Limit Deal

*IIJA Funding Untouched, Permitting Reforms Advance*

Here is a quick summary of the major provisions of the deal of interest to ACEC



Illinois members:

### Raising the Debt Limit

The bill suspends the debt ceiling until January 1, 2025, avoiding a default and providing the Treasury Department borrowing authority for two years before Congress would have to approve another debt limit increase.

### Spending Caps

The deal sets separate caps for defense and nondefense programs for the next two

years. Discretionary funding that exceeds statutory limits for a fiscal year would be subject to sequestration, an automatic process that cancels spending across the board to conform to the caps. (The deal also includes caps in subsequent fiscal years, but they are not subject to the same strict statutory and procedural controls.)

Nondefense spending in Fiscal Year 2024 is capped at \$703.7 billion and \$710.7 billion in Fiscal Year 2025. The bill would keep 2024 nondefense spending roughly the same as 2023 levels when accounting for appropriations adjustments, according to the White House.

The bill would cap FY 2024 discretionary spending for defense programs at \$886.3 billion, roughly a 3.3% increase from the fiscal 2023 level, as proposed by President Biden in his budget request. It would cap fiscal 2025 defense spending at \$895.2 billion.

The bill also incentivizes completion of all individual appropriations bills before the end of the calendar year: if a "continuing resolution" is in effect on or after January 1, 2024, the discretionary spending limits for FY 2024 would be reduced by 1% less than the 2023 base funding amounts. Similar requirements would apply if a CR is in effect on or after January 1, 2025.

### Rescission of COVID Relief Funds

The legislation rescinds approximately \$27 billion provided under various laws enacted in 2020 for COVID relief, as well as the FY 2021 budget package. Importantly, this includes a rescission of unspent supplemental highway funding that was provided to State DOTs in the December 2020 omnibus bill. When the debt limit deal was reached last weekend, the estimated total of unobligated funding was \$2.2 billion and it is now down to \$1.67 billion.

IDOT has already obligated all of its COVID related supplemental highway funding, so no state funds are at risk.

The budget deal does not touch IIJA funding. In fact, the bill includes a specific provision that says even if there was a future rescission or repeal of IIJA funds, it would not count for budget scorekeeping purposes and cannot be used to pay for any new spending, so that effectively takes it off the table for any future cuts.

### Permitting Reform

The legislation includes statutory reforms to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), including project threshold, interagency coordination and review deadlines to prevent project delay, limits on what qualifies as a major federal action, and limits to prevent agencies from missing statutory deadlines. ACEC has consistently supported many of these provisions – in fact, the message to lawmakers during our Capitol Hill visits in next week may essentially be "thank you" for including these reforms.

- Amends NEPA to clarify and narrow agency considerations to "reasonably foreseeable environmental impacts of the proposed agency action," "reasonably foreseeable adverse environmental effects," and "a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed action that are technically and economically feasible and meet the purpose and need of the proposed action."
- Codifies key elements of the One Federal Decision Framework, including development by the lead agency of a joint schedule, procedures to elevate delays or disputes, and, to the extent practicable, preparation of a single environmental document. The

legislation also sets reasonable page limits for environmental documents and reasonable time limits of one year for environmental assessments and 2 years for environmental impact statements.

- Includes threshold considerations for agencies assessing whether NEPA applies to a proposed activity. The bill also includes provisions facilitating agencies adopting Categorical Exclusions of other agencies through a streamlined process.
- Permits a project sponsor to assist agencies in conducting environmental reviews to help speed up the process and to resolve issues without taking control or authority away from the lead agency.
- Clarifies that a major federal action is limited to those which are "subject to Federal control and responsibility." It establishes a threshold consideration that is independent of the significance of impacts that may follow. It includes examples of actions that are not "major Federal actions."
- Directs the Council on Environmental Quality to conduct a study on applying modern digital technologies to provide efficiencies in the permitting process; requiring the consideration of a government-wide permitting portal to streamline communications and data sharing between agencies and applicants.
- Authorizes the North American Electric Reliability Corporation to carry out, in consultation with regional operators, a study to examine total current transfer capabilities and provide recommendations to strengthen reliability and meet and maintain transfer capability between neighboring transmission regions.
- Adds energy storage to this list of covered projects eligible for streamlining under the FAST Act.



## Supreme Court: Sackett Ruling Update

[E&E News: Supreme Court erases protections for most wetlands](#)

*The Supreme Court's Thursday ruling in a Clean Water Act case involving an Idaho couple's property erases protections for the majority of the nation's wetlands, while also throwing the Biden administration's signature water policy into limbo.*

*The 5-4 decision in *Sackett v. EPA* — written by Justice Samuel Alito, heavily quoting the late Justice Antonin Scalia — finds that wetlands are only protected by the Clean Water Act if they have a continuous surface connection with a larger body of water that makes it "difficult to determine where the 'water' ends and the 'wetland' begins."*

*That interpretation provides an even more narrow reading of Clean Water Act jurisdiction than the Trump administration proposed in its 2020 Navigable Waters Protection Rule. That regulation only protected wetlands as waters of the United States, or WOTUS, if they had "relatively permanent" surface water connections with other nearby waterways and included protections for wetlands that were cut off from nearby waterways by human-made structures like roads or berms.*

### [Sackett v. EPA: What's Next for Clean Water Act Jurisdiction?](#)

*Clean Water Act practitioners have spent the past 50 years learning how to identify a wetland or water body that qualifies for federal jurisdiction—and the past 17 parsing the phrase "significant nexus." The upshot was that virtually all wetlands, streams, and ditches were subject to federal rules. All of that is out the window now.*

*In *Sackett v. EPA*, the Supreme Court dramatically redefined the term at the jurisdictional heart of the federal Clean Water Act: "waters of the United States." The narrowness of that new definition will change how the Act works.*

ACEC Illinois' US Army Corps Committee is meeting with USACE leadership to get guidance as the impact of this decision becomes better known.

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

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# Introducing the 2023-2024 ACEC Illinois Board of Directors



Back Row (L-R): Kevin Artl, P.J. Fitzpatrick, Steve Donahue, Scott Harding, Jeff Ball, Jerry Payonk, Brian Welker, George Ghareeb, John Clark, Paul Kovacs and Tanya Adams

Front Row (L-R): Harvind Singh, Natalia Homedi, Stacie Dovalovsky, Linda Moen, Lou Gallucci, Amar Rajpurkar, Laura McGovern and Thomas Hein

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE



ADVOCACY



EDUCATIONAL



BUSINESS



## Media Club - Session 1: The You Project

June 13, 2023 | 12pm - 1pm

Location: Rock Bottom Brewery - Lombard

Moderator: Ryan Walter, Woolpert

Register [HERE](#)



## Media Club - Session 2: Transitioning from Engineer to Manager

June 14, 2023 | 12pm - 1pm

Location: Elephant & Castle - Chicago

Moderator: Eric Ozimok, Atlas Engineering

Register [HERE](#)



## Media Club - Session 3: Finding your mentor & developing a relationship

June 15, 2023 | 12pm - 1pm

Location: Virtual

Moderator: Laura McGovern, Benesch

Register [HERE](#)



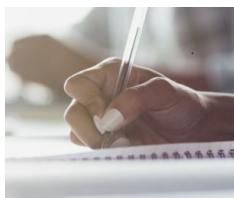
## Media Club - Session 4: Envisioning the Future of Chicago Transportation

June 20, 2023 | 12pm - 1pm

Location: Virtual

Moderator: Luis Montgomery, 2IM Group

Register [HERE](#)



## 2023 Master's Class

Session 1: September 14, 2023

Register [HERE](#)

*save the date*

**IDOT MYP Update Luncheon  
with Steve Travia, Director of Highways**

**TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2023  
11:30am - 1:30pm**

**HARRY CARAY'S, LOMBARD**



Illinois Department  
of Transportation

HOSTED BY:

**ACEC**

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES  
*of Illinois*

save the date

**COUNTY ENGINEERS LUNCHEON**

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2023**  
**11:30AM - 1:30PM**

**HARRY CARAY'S, LOMBARD**

HOSTED BY:

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*of Illinois*



save the date

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES *of Illinois*



# 2023 FALL CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 23 & 24, 2023

CHAMPAIGN, IL

## MISSING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HOURS FROM CLASSES YOU ALREADY TOOK?

- EMAIL [BETHANY@ACECIL.ORG](mailto:BETHANY@ACECIL.ORG)
- INCLUDE: CLASS NAME, DATE OF CLASS, ATTENDEE EMAIL ADDRESS



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## 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](mailto:emily@acecil.org)

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## MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

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**WBK Engineering, LLC**  
**- Certified as DBE**



WBK Engineering, LLC (WBK) is excited to inform you that we have recently been certified through **PACE** as a **Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)** in the state of Illinois. WBK has over 25 years of civil engineering and related consulting experience including transportation, bridge and structural, municipal, environmental and water resources, planning and development, and construction oversight services.

Contact WBK Engineering [Here](#)

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## **ACEC Retirement Trust Shares the Wealth (of knowledge) regarding SECURE 2.0**

On December 29, 2022, the passage of the *SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022* resulted in some important changes to qualified retirement plans. If your plan is part of the ACEC Retirement Trust, you have received quite a few pieces of information regarding SECURE 2.0 and how it affects your plan. If you are not part of the ACEC Retirement Trust, today is your lucky day so keep reading!

[\*\*FULL ARTICLE HERE\*\*](#)

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## Matt Lehan

Project Manager - Transportation

# Welcome!

We're excited to welcome Matt Lehan, P.E., who has joined Michael Baker International's Chicago office as a Transportation Project Manager in our Road and Highway Department.

Matt has more than 25 years of experience with a comprehensive background including: project management, preliminary studies, design plans, and specifications for expressways, arterial routes, and local streets. He most recently served as the Design Lead for the I-294 design corridor management contract where he was responsible for ensuring consistency and designing elements to reconstruct 22 miles of the Central Tri-State Tollway from Balmoral Avenue to 95th Street.

In his new role at Michael Baker, Matt will be responsible for project management for IDOT, Tollway, and local agency projects, including traditional design-bid-build projects and design-build projects; QA/QC of plans and specifications; engaging in project pursuits; and mentoring and training junior staff.

Matt has a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign.

**Michael Baker**  
INTERNATIONAL

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# Update from ACEC Retirement Trust



[LISTEN HERE](#)

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ISSUE ONE • 2023

# ENGINEERING INC.

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## Navigating Turbulent Times

*Effective firm strategies  
to manage economic drama*

Engineers Confront Impact  
of Southwest Drought

MO Profile:  
ACEC Virginia

ACEC/PAC Achieves  
Record Growth

Thornton Tomasetti:  
Building Bridges

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Photo Gallery



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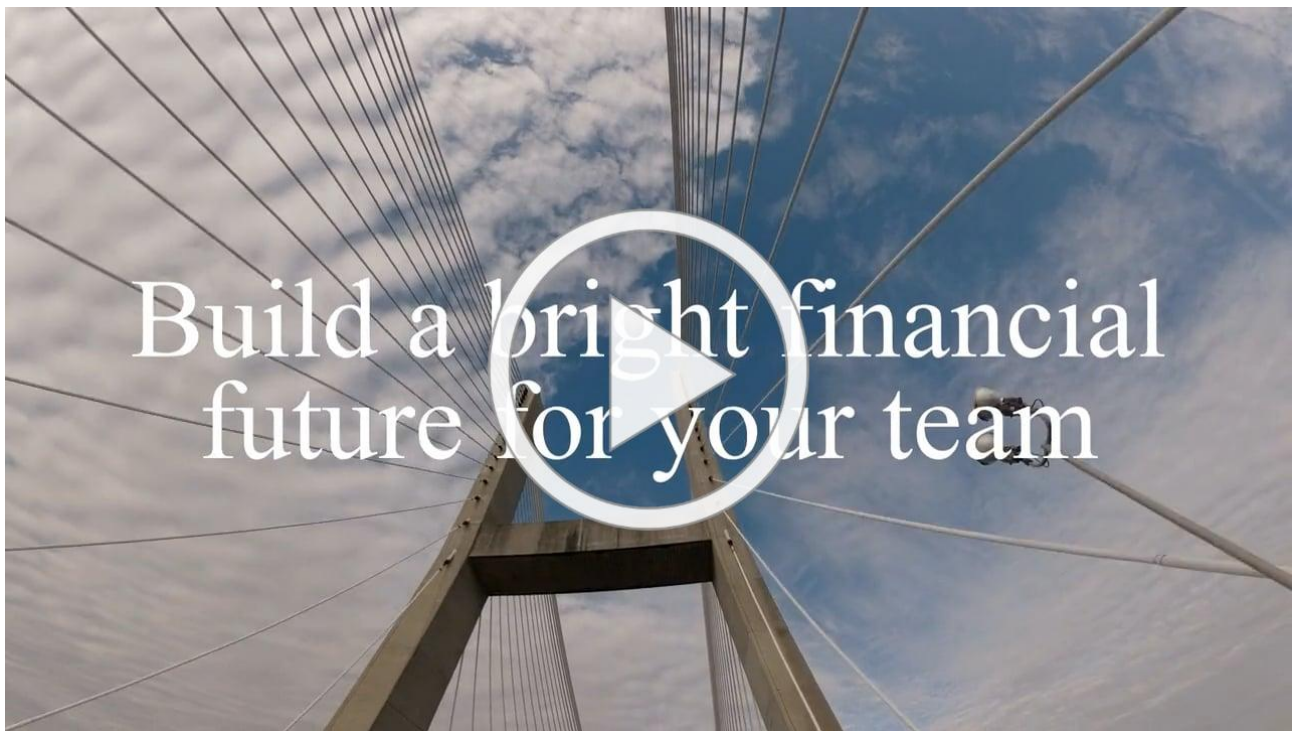
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# 100% of members give ACEC Retirement Trust a



Find out why ACEC Retirement Trust gets a 100% satisfaction rating. It's an exclusive 401(k) program for ACEC members

ACEC **RT.** [SEE WHY](#)



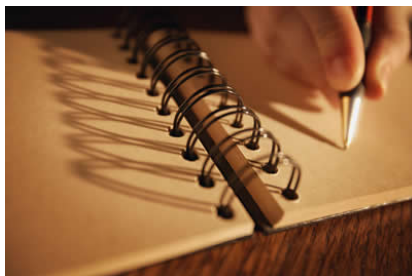
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**FURRY FRIENDS**

#ACECILPETS



## 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.

Website: [www.acecil.org](http://www.acecil.org)

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