



# ACEA Today

Official quarterly newsletter of the Association of County Engineers of Alabama  
First Quarter 2009

## Thinking Outside the Box

When I was growing up, I was taught that every problem has a solution, if I only looked hard enough...work the problem hard enough...I could find the answer.



Wayne Sullivan  
ACEA President  
Jefferson County Engineer

Every problem has a solution, right? One would think that would be the case. So, what's ours?

If you read **ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield's** article in this past edition of *County Commissioner* magazine, you'll see that even though we may think that every problem *should* have a solution, it's going to be up to us, ACCA and ACEA together, to find it.

Creative problem-solving is going to be how we find the funds to fix our county roads and bridges. That means each of us is going to find ourselves thinking outside the "box" to find solutions to problems we face every day.

The best way to solve a problem is to talk to people. My good friend **Chambers County Engineer Henry Hawkins** is a huge proponent of sharing ideas. In fact, Henry has often been heard saying that if a problem exists in one county, it has or had existed in another county.

We need to find better ways of sharing information, discovering how problems are approached and solved in other counties – or better yet, get involved in the National Association of County Engineers or the National Association of Counties. How are problems being solved outside of Alabama?

The problems we are facing here in Alabama are not unique to our great state. Funding issues are nationwide. The keys to our success could be found by networking with engineers in other states. Have you made any contacts with your counterparts outside of Alabama? Have you tried?

I would like to challenge all of our county engineers to begin thinking differently to solve our problems. Like

Sonny wrote in his article, what we have been doing, and what we have been trying to do, simply isn't working. *But, it isn't for the lack of our trying.* There has been an enormous amount of might behind each plan in those 17 years Sonny wrote about in his article. Each year brought new lessons.

Now, it's time for us to try new things, think differently, act differently. Our world has changed tremendously, and we may never be able to find our way back to how things were in the "good ol' days." But, if we keep going, striving harder for our communities and our citizens, we may be able to find a better way to keep everyone safe.

Talk is cheap. So, what better way to find a solution than to communicate with each other and to open communication with other engineers that you've met during your careers.

Talk. Write. Communicate. Discuss. Remember, we are all in this together, and together we *can* find a solution. Maybe not today, but it's a start.

### HAVE YOU MADE YOUR PLANS FOR THE SUMMER?

**ACCA's 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention** is almost here! We've included a tentative agenda and instructions on how to register online in this newsletter for your convenience.

*Economic Development...The Missing Piece* is scheduled for **Aug. 18-20** for the **Perdido Beach Resort** in **Orange Beach**. Log on to [www.acca-online.org](http://www.acca-online.org) and click **Conference and Events** to register online.

Don't forget to make your hotel reservations! To reserve online, visit [www.perdidobeachresort.com](http://www.perdidobeachresort.com), click "Reservations," and use group code 3703. You may also call the hotel at (800) 634-8001 and identify yourself with the Association of County Commissions of Alabama to get ACCA's discounted rate of **\$147 per night** for a standard room. The deadline to make hotel reservations is **July 17**.

## ACEA 2008-09 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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<b>CHARLES MARKERT</b>	Calhoun County
<b>MARK POOL</b>	Houston County
<b>DAVID POPE, CEA</b>	Madison County
<b>JOE RUFFER, CEA</b>	Mobile County

## HOW TO REGISTER ONLINE FOR CONFERENCES



- Please understand that a lot of effort went into making sure this system works well for ACCA and our affiliates. We are aware that some will experience problems or have trouble registering, but do not hesitate to contact Jennifer in the ACCA office to help resolve issues.
- Registrations will not be accepted via any other method. You **MUST** register through the online system.
- Each person must register individually for the conference. You might want to think about assigning the duty of registering everyone in the office to one staff member. That staff member would be responsible for registering each person individually for all ACCA events and keeping up with everyone's login and password.
- First, go to [www.acca-online.org](http://www.acca-online.org).
- Click on **Conference and Events** on the top left side of the menu bar. Scroll down to the **ACCA Annual Convention**. Click on the tab to **Register Online**. (This will bring you to a **Welcome** page.)
- Your first step is to log in. You must be logged in to register for an event. Click on **Login** on the left side of the page.
- Enter your primary e-mail address. The current default password is **Password1**. Once you login for the first time it will prompt you to change to password. After you change your password, click on **Click Here to Continue** to bring up all of your current account information.
- **If it says, "Incorrect E-mail or Password,"** we must not have you in the system. Go to **New Visitor Registration** to create an account. You'll need to enter your contact information and hit **Create Account**. From there continue on to the next step.
- Click on **Upcoming Events** on the left side of the page. This will bring up a list of upcoming events. There will be several pages, and you may have to scroll to page 4 or 5 to find the convention information.
- Click on **Convention Registration for Counties** and click **Register For This Event**. Look over the badge information provided and click on **Add to Cart**.
- If you need to register for something else (fishing, golf, spouse tour, etc.) click **Continue Shopping**, and click on **Upcoming Events** again on the left side of the page to find the correct event. **NOTE: You can have multiple items in your cart and check out all at once.**
- **TO REGISTER YOUR SPOUSE OR GUEST:** Put your convention registration in your shopping cart. Click **Continue Shopping** and click on **Upcoming Events** again on the left side of the page. Then, click on **ACCA Annual Convention Spouse Registration**. *Please note the Spouse Registration is different from the Spouse Tour. There is no charge for Spouse Registration, but the Spouse Tour costs money.* Change the information in the boxes provided to your spouse/guests information and click on add to cart.
- When you are ready, hit the **Checkout** button in the shopping cart. Enter your billing information if necessary. Click **Next**. Then choose your **Payment Option**. You have the option of being billed for the event or paying with a credit card. If you choose **Bill Me**, please print your receipt and use that as an invoice for payment. **Please make all checks payable to ACCA, 100 N. Jackson Street, Montgomery, AL 36104.**
- Once you complete your registration you will receive a confirmation e-mail detailing your purchase.
- Please call or e-mail Jennifer or Donna in the ACCA office if you have questions: Jennifer Datcher at [jdatcher@acca-online.org](mailto:jdatcher@acca-online.org); Donna Key at [dkey@acca-online.org](mailto:dkey@acca-online.org); (334) 263-7594.

## Education Programs Set for Evaluation

A committee composed of representatives of ACCA's affiliate organizations will reconvene this summer to look at various options for enhancing the affiliate educational programs. The effort is part of the long-range plan adopted by ACCA's Board of Directors and membership last year.



The committee held organization and planning sessions last winter and hopes to make a formal recommendation this fall.

"We look forward to working with the educational evaluation committee this summer to make sure we are meeting the needs of our staff members across the state," said **ACCA President Joe Faulk**. "A program this important should be evaluated and enhanced every few years because we rely on the leadership of our staff members and trust that they are well-informed on the current challenges facing county government."

The Association's educational programs currently provide a "certification" process for various county employees, including a Certificate in County Administration and the designation of Certified County Administrator. Many of the courses offered in the program are common to all the educational programs and then specific courses are offered for each individual affiliate group.

"Our affiliate programs are an essential part of our success, both at the county and state levels," explained **ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield**. "We are very interested in doing whatever we can to provide the most effective training programs."

## Houston County Engineer Receives 2009 ACEA Engineer of the Year Award

Congratulations to **Houston County Engineer Mark Pool** who received ACEA's Engineer of the Year in April during the annual conference.

"This is truly an honor...being named the state's top county engineer by your colleagues," Pool said. "I'm absolutely humbled. But, the truth is, I couldn't do my job without the dedication of the staff of the Houston County Road and Bridge Department. We all work together as a team, and it's only right to share this with everyone on the team."



*Mark Pool  
ACEA 2009 County  
Engineer of the Year*

Pool, who has been Houston County's top county engineer since 1995, is also a past president of ACEA and remains active in the Association on committees and with the

statewide County Joint Bid Project, a project to allow counties to save money while purchasing heavy equipment, herbicides and road signs.

"Mark's involvement in ACEA is an example we can all follow," said **ACEA President and Jefferson County Engineer Wayne Sullivan**. "His selflessness and consistent dedication serving our Association and membership have brought on many benefits for the group. Mark is very progressive and inventive, and his can-do attitude are just a few examples of his leadership in our Association. It was an honor to be able to present Mark with this award."

## Don't Miss this Deadline!

The deadline for the **2009 National Roadway Safety Awards** applications is **June 1, 2009**. For more details and an application, visit [www.roadwaysafetyawards.org](http://www.roadwaysafetyawards.org). Or, for additional information, contact Janet Ewing at (202) 366-8029 or FHWA Office of Safety at (202) 366-2288.

## Need Comments for Draft Footprint Design Manual for Local Roads

**Mobile County Engineer Joe Ruffer** has been working on this NACE manual as a member of the ASCE Local Roads and Streets Committee of the Design, Construction and Maintenance Council and needs additional input and comments.

In response to limited design guidance available for Resurfacing, Restoration and Rehabilitation (RRR) projects, functionally classified as "Local Roads" of the National Highway System, this committee has specifically undertaken the task to develop systematic methods that relate to Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation (RRR) projects.

The committee's critical reviews and findings, from publications like Transportation Research Board, "Special Report 214", 1987 (1); AASHTO, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, "Guidelines for Geometric Design of Very Low-Volume Local Roads (ADT  $\leq$  400)", 2001 (2); AASHTO, Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials "Geometric Design for Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation (RRR) of Streets", 1977 (3), and many other local agency internal publications were used to make judgments about the relationship between safety and key highway features.

Log on to this site for a copy in draft format:  
<http://documents.siteonestudio.com/uploads/mobilepw/781.pdf>.

If you have comments or input please contact Joe Ruffer at (251) 574-8595 or e-mail at [jruffer@mobilecounty.net](mailto:jruffer@mobilecounty.net).

# 81st ANNUAL Convention

Aug. 18-20, 2009 • Perdido Beach Resort • Orange Beach, Ala. • TENTATIVE AGENDA

## MONDAY, AUG. 17

**12 p.m.**

Golf Tournament Lunch

**1 p.m.**

Golf Tournament Shotgun Start  
Glenlakes Golf Club in Foley, Ala.

**1 – 7 p.m.**

Fishing Expedition  
Reel Surprise Charter Docks

## TUESDAY, AUG. 18

**9 – 10 a.m.**

ACEA Board Meeting

**10 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

Affiliate Membership Meetings

**ACEA @ 10 a.m.;** ACAA @ 1 p.m.; AAND @  
3 p.m.; AAEM @ 4 p.m.

**11 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

Registration Desk Open

**11 a.m. – 7 p.m.**

Exhibit Showcase

**11 a.m. – Noon**

ACCA Board of Directors Meeting

**12 – 1 p.m.**

Strolling Lunch in the Exhibit Hall

**1 – 5 p.m.**

CROAA Educational Session

**2 – 3 p.m.**

- Minority Issues Steering Committee  
(Open Forum)

- ACCA Workers Compensation and  
Liability Insurance Fund Meeting

**5 – 6:30 p.m.**

Opening Reception in the Exhibit Hall

## WEDNESDAY, AUG. 19

**7:30 – 8:30 a.m.**

- Convention Breakfast

- Nominating Committee Meeting

- Resolutions Committee Meeting

**8 – 11:30 a.m.**

Registration Desk Open

**8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

Opening General Session

- State of the Economy, *Dr. David  
Bronner (Invited)*

- Development of Rural Areas, *Larry Lee,  
Director, The Center for Rural Alabama*

- Stimulus Funding for Alabama  
Counties, *David Perry, Attorney,  
Maynard Cooper & Gale*

- An Economic Success Story in Houston  
County, *Mark Culver, Chairman,  
Houston County Commission; Ronnie  
Gilley, Owner, Ronnie Gilley Properties*

- Economic Development Districts

- Partnering with Industry

- Report of the Nominating Committee

**12 – 1:15 p.m.**

County Agents Kitchen Lunch

**1:30 – 4:45 p.m.**

Concurrent Sessions

- Jail Workshop, *Ken Webb, Webb & Eley,  
P.C.*

- County Bond Financing Review

- Feeding of Prisoners

- Pros and Cons of Subdivision  
Regulations

- Is Self-Governance for Your County? *Bill  
Cook, Macon County Compliance  
Officer*

- Improvement Districts, *Alston Ray,  
Johnston Barton Proctor & Rose*

**4:45 p.m.**

ALGTI Board Meeting

## THURSDAY, AUG. 20

**7:45 – 8:45 a.m.**

County Agents Kitchen Breakfast

**8 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

CROAA Educational Session

**8:45 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

Breakout Sessions

### Commissioners

- Stimulus Discretionary Project

- Update on FEMA Public Assistance  
Grants, *Benji Abbott, AEMA*

- ADEM's Recycling Grant and Dump  
Cleanup Programs, *Phillip Davis, Solid  
Waste Branch, ADEM*

- Rural Water and Sewer Authorities

- County Striping Programs: Two  
Approaches, Same Results – Saving  
Money!

### ACEA

- ALDOT Update

- Employee Recruitment and Retention

- Stimulus Discretionary Project

- Workers Compensation Issues

### ACAA

- Examiners Report

- Sanitation Collection

- Reimbursement for Elections

### AAEM

- Emergency Fund Legislation

### AAND

- 211 Program

- Elected Officials View of 9-1-1

**10:45 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

Spouse Program – A Day at the SPA

**12 – 1:15 p.m.**

Convention Luncheon Honoring  
2008-2009 President Joe Faulk

**1:45 – 4:45 p.m.**

Afternoon General Session

- Awards Ceremony

- Washington Report

Sen. Jeff Sessions (*Invited*)

Rep. Mike Rogers

NACo President Valerie Brown

- ACCA Business Session

Executive Directors Report

District Caucuses

**6:30 p.m.**

President's Banquet Honoring 2009-  
2010 President-Elect Larry White

**8 p.m.**

President's Inaugural Dance  
Featuring *The Sweet Young Uns*