



# ACEA Today

Official quarterly newsletter of the Association of County Engineers of Alabama  
Second Quarter 2008

## County Engineers Work Hard to Make a Difference on State, National Levels

As this report reaches your desk, we have reached the halfway point in my year as your president. We have already accomplished some amazing tasks as a group.



Richie Beyer, CEA  
ACEA President  
Elmore County Engineer

In an effort to educate our legislators and the public as to the condition of our county road and bridge systems, we gathered information from all 67 counties and summarized our needs in a standardized format. We then “toured” our respective legislative delegations in traditional and creative ways to view firsthand the conditions of our county infrastructure networks.

Even though we have been able to get this information out, we do not need to lose focus now that the legislature is in session. *It is imperative that all of us continue to communicate and make ourselves available to our legislative members to explain our needs and challenges.* The constant

diminishing buying power of our current revenue sources and the continuation of escalating energy and material costs require now more than ever action on our part to educate decision makers so they are empowered to make wise choices.

In that same vein, I am fortunate that my county commission and the ACCA allow me to serve at the national level on NACO’s Transportation Steering Committee. I bring this up for one simple reason. Since joining this committee several years ago, the focus of the committee has been on the next reauthorization bill or as one of our distinguished colleagues refers to it as the revolutionary highway bill.

The federal program faces serious challenges one of which is that the Highway Trust Fund is projected to be depleted this year. Federal projects are also experiencing the same material and energy increase issues affecting our local programs. The Congress set up a study commission, which just released its final report in January 2008. I

recommend that you log on to [www.transportationfortomorrow.org](http://www.transportationfortomorrow.org) to read in depth the recommendations of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission.

Serving on the steering committee alongside our **ACEA Vice President Wayne Sullivan** has been an educational process for both of us. We have both had the opportunity to hear from several members on the 12-person committee and gain insight from their perspectives. These national issues are very similar to our state issues, and thus I feel it would be wise to educate ourselves in an effort to anticipate and react to future changes at the federal level.

In closing, I look forward to seeing everyone at our annual conference in a few weeks. Please keep up the encouragement with regard to our legislative members as I greatly appreciate all your efforts that been expended and those yet to come.

### SAVE THESE DATES – COUNTY ENGINEERING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

**LEGAL PRIMER: PUBLIC ROADS (April 9-10)** A major responsibility of all county employees is the safety and maintenance of public roads. This course offers an overview of a county’s obligations relative to personal liability, accident investigation, and record keeping. It also provides an overview of workplace safety, the personal liability of the county engineer, claim preparation, being an effective witness, the Uniform Traffic Manual, rights-of-way condemnation, and county regulatory authority. \$155 – Call 800-634-7199 to register.

**GENERAL MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION I (June 18-19)** An administrator wears many hats: a leader, a manager and a supervisor. This course teaches the basic skills necessary to supervise employees and how to apply many tried-and tested management techniques that will help improve the performance of county employees and the functioning of county departments. \$155 – Call 800-634-7199 to register.

## ACEA 2007-08 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## Long-Time Bridge Engineer Retires

After 43 years with the Alabama Department of Transportation, Bridge Engineer Fred Conway formally retired during a reception in Montgomery on Jan. 30. With a room filled with family, friends and colleagues on tap to not only encourage him as he was getting ready to leave his office for the last time, but they were also there to roast him with a great many “Good Ole Fred” stories from back in the day.



Fred Conway with ACEA Treasurer Tim Graves at the retirement ceremony

ACEA wanted to make sure this long-time friend to county engineering enjoyed his first year of retirement. **Etowah County Engineer and ACEA Secretary/Treasurer Tim Graves** presented Fred with a year's membership and green's fees to Cottonwood Golf Club in Montgomery County.

## Motor Grader School Needs Students!

If you plan to sign up your motorgrader operators, please do so quickly! These classes have very limited seating and will go quickly. Registration forms may be found online at [www.acea-online.org](http://www.acea-online.org).

**May 12-13 in Houston County** – 10 seats available – deadline to register is April 22 (Sponsored by Tractor and Equipment)

**May 13-14 in Butler County** – 5 seats available – deadline to register is April 23 (Offered by Thompson Tractor – *Registration \$400 per participant*)

**May 20-21 in Elmore County** – 5 seats available – deadline to register is April 29 (Offered by Thompson Tractor – *Registration \$400 per participant*)

**June 10-11 in Etowah County** – 10 seats available – deadline to register is May 21 (Sponsored by Tractor and Equipment)

## County Day @ the Legislature

**Wednesday and Thursday • April 16-17, 2008**

For County Day @ The Legislature this year, we switched our schedule to meet on Thursday and Friday. Because fewer organization host events on these days, we feel it will increase legislator participation and allow our membership greater access to their State Senators and Representatives for meetings and dinner.

There will be a briefing on Wednesday, April 16, at the Alabama Activity Center in downtown Montgomery. Registration will be at 1 p.m. and the briefing will begin at 2 p.m. to outline the status of ACCA's legislative package and Danger Bills.

During your stay, dinner is on your own making this the perfect opportunity for you to make plans with your legislators. Breakfast with Legislators will be Thursday, April 17, at the Alabama Activity Center from 8-9:30 a.m. Immediately following breakfast, we will go to the Alabama State House and spend the rest of the morning lobbying.

**Registration is only \$25 per person**, and registration forms are online at [www.acca-online.org](http://www.acca-online.org). County Day @ the Legislature requires an overnight stay, so a block of rooms is available at the Embassy Suites Hotel in downtown Montgomery. **The room rate is \$139**, and you may reserve a room by calling (334) 269-5055 or 1-800-Embassy or by logging on to [www.embassysuitesmontgomery.com](http://www.embassysuitesmontgomery.com), and use group code **CCA**.

## Funding Package Needs a Push!

The four-bill package to provide funds to improve county roads and bridges remains in the House Government Appropriations Committee.



County engineers are asked to make personal contacts with the committee members to seek their support for the legislation.

Certainly the recent spike in gasoline prices at the pump has hampered the movement of the bills that would increase the statewide gasoline and motor fuel taxes, as well as the bill that would authorize counties to level local taxes for construction and safety projects. The fate of this legislation (HB470 and HB471) will depend on contacts from county officials and engineers.

Quite honestly, the legislation will only be placed on the committee agenda when a majority of the committee members have committed to vote in favor of the measure.

**The members of the House Government Appropriations Committee are: Chairman Rep. John Knight; Reps. Jack Page, Victor Gaston, Gerald Allen, Lucy Baker, Billy Beasley, Greg Canfield, Ronald Grantland, Laura Hall, Jody Letson, Charles Newton, Yusuf Salaam and Elwyn Thomas.**

The long-discussed bill to alter the collection point for motor fuels appears to be in better shape for consideration this session. Persistent resistance from the convenience-store operators has been resolved this session, so the opportunities for consideration of this legislation are more significant.

This legislation, HB722, is sponsored by Rep. Johnny Mac Morrow and is expected on the agenda of the Government Appropriations Committee within the next two weeks.

Finally, the legislation establishing a second county bridge bond issue (HB466 by Rep. Mike Hill) continues to enjoy substantial legislative support from the leadership in both chambers. Funding to repay the bonds, an estimated \$18 million per year, must be identified in the coming weeks.

The Association staff has held several meetings with House leaders and the Legislative Fiscal Office to explore various options for funding the bond payments. In the meantime, it is important for county engineers to continue to discuss the need for this bond issue and the unacceptable conditions of our roads and bridges. —  
*Sonny Brasfield, ACCA Assistant Executive Director*

## Rural Safety Innovation Program Accepting Applications for Grants

For Alabama's county engineers, safety of our residents is priority one. Considering that in 2006, Alabama's highways claimed 1,208 lives – 401 of which died on country or rural roads – finding new ways to keep our rural roads safe can be a challenge.

The Federal Highway Administration's Rural Safety Innovation Program is one way to find extra funding to support quality programs and improve rural road safety.

The goal of the Rural Safety Innovation Program is to improve rural road safety by assisting rural communities in addressing highway safety problems and by providing rural communities the opportunity to compete for project funding to address these problems. The program encourages states and rural communities to develop creative, locally crafted solutions to roadway safety problems, document their efforts and outcomes, and share the results with other communities across the country.

Through the Rural Safety Innovation Program, the U.S. Department of Transportation aims to heighten awareness and interest in rural safety issues, and promote the benefits of rural safety countermeasures that can reduce rural crashes and fatalities nationwide. By providing technical assistance and best practice guidance from the program, the U.S. Department of Transportation will give states and rural road owners better tools to improve road safety in their communities.

Applications must be received on or before **April 14**. Proposals for applications selected for potential funding will be due in **June 2008**. Applications should be addressed to John E. Dewar, State and Local Programs Team Leader, Federal and Local Programs Team Leader, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Office of Safety, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590, or send an e-mail to [ruralsafetyinitiative@dot.gov](mailto:ruralsafetyinitiative@dot.gov). For more information, contact John Dewar at [john.dewar2@dot.gov](mailto:john.dewar2@dot.gov) or by phone at (202) 366-2218.

An electronic copy of the application process and explanation can be found online at the Office of the Federal Register's home page at [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov) and the Government Printing Office's Web page at [www.gpoaccess.gov/nara/index.html](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/nara/index.html).

# 2008 ACEA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 2008 ACEA Annual Conference is scheduled for **April 29-30** at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, Ala. We hope you will make your plans NOW to attend!

Conference registration for ACEA members is **\$165** each if we receive your registration before **Friday, April 4**. Registrations received after Friday, April 4, are \$180 each. Log online to [www.acea-online.org](http://www.acea-online.org) for a registration packet complete with a conference registration form, information on the John F. Courson Excellence in County Engineering Award and a golf tournament registration form. Save your county a little money and register early!

To reserve your room at the Perdido Beach Resort, you may call the hotel directly at 800-634-8001 or log onto [www.perdidobeachresort.com](http://www.perdidobeachresort.com), and then go to the "Make Your Reservations" section. Enter 2111 in the Group Code section. The conference room rate is **\$169** a night. **Please understand that we must use 85 PERCENT of our room block or the ACEA will have to pay for the unused rooms. We are asking that you please stay at the Perdido Beach Resort in support of the ACEA.**

If you have any problems or questions regarding the conference or making your hotel reservations, please call Donna Key at (334) 263-7594, or send an email to [dkey@acca-online.org](mailto:dkey@acca-online.org). We look forward to seeing you in Orange Beach!



## ACEA CONFERENCE AGENDA

### TUESDAY, APRIL 29

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| <p><b>10 a.m.</b> ACEA Golf Tournament Registration<br/>Glenlakes Golf Club</p> <p><b>11 a.m.</b> Shotgun Start, ACEA Golf Tournament (A boxed lunch will be provided)</p> <p><b>3 - 6 p.m.</b> Conference Registration</p> <p><b>6 - 7 p.m.</b> Opening Reception</p> <p>Dinner on your own.</p> | <p><b>12 - 1 p.m.</b> President's Luncheon and Awards Ceremony</p> <p><b>1:15 - 5 p.m.</b> Afternoon General Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. Communities<br/>Chris Robb, Program Manager</li> <li>• Liability Update<br/>Craig Dillard, Webb &amp; Eley, P.C.</li> <li>• ALDOT Update<br/>Ed Phillips, Chief, County Transportation Bureau</li> <li>• New Federal Requirements for Sign Retroreflectivity</li> <li>• New ALDOT Striping Requirements</li> <li>• Virtual Alabama<br/>Chris Johnson, Vice President - Geospatial Training and Application Center, U.S. Space &amp; Rocket Center</li> <li>• Legislative Report<br/>ACCA Staff</li> <li>• ACEA Business Session<br/>Richie Beyer, ACEA President, presiding</li> </ul> |
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### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30

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| <p><b>7:15 - 8:15 a.m.</b> Conference Breakfast</p> <p><b>7:15 - 8:15 a.m.</b> ACEA Board of Directors Meeting</p> <p><b>8 - 10 a.m.</b> Conference Registration</p> <p><b>8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.</b> Opening General Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NACE Update<br/>Susan Miller, NACE President Elect (Invited)</li> <li>• Update from the Alabama Division of the Federal Highway Administration<br/>Mark Bartlett, Division Administrator</li> <li>• Concrete Inverts for Metal Pipes<br/>Henry Hawkins, Chambers County Engineer</li> </ul> | <p><b>6 - 8 p.m.</b> Dinner at Live Bait</p> |
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