



# ACEA Today

*Official quarterly newsletter of the Association of County Engineers of Alabama*  
Fourth Quarter 2008

## A Year of Challenges Ahead

The “first” of everything is always the best, I guess. Years from now, I wonder if the “first” ACEA long-range planning retreat last month will be remembered as the best.

Held in conjunction with a similar event for the ACCA Board of Directors, our retreat focused on issues related to funding for road and bridge departments, as well as looking into the future to determine a better course for our Association. I appreciate all the board members who made the sacrifice and commitment to be part of the event. It will pay dividends down the road.

As is often the case, we really didn't have enough time to scope out solutions to the problems we identified. We'll work on that later this year. But, the first step in moving us forward is to establish some priorities for the coming years.

As you might imagine, the first priority is additional funding for road and bridge maintenance. Everyone agrees that in both the short- and long-term we face challenges from both sides – our revenue is declining and our expenses are increasing. Together, we must work on solutions.

The next group of challenges for the future revolve around our workforce. Many engineers expressed concern regarding the age of our workforce, inadequate training for our workforce, and difficulties in recruiting suitable employees. As our state moves further and further away from a farm-based economy, securing experienced employees in our road and bridge departments will be on the forefront of issues that must be tackled.

Our aging infrastructure system and the increasing pressure from growth in the unincorporated area is a third area of concern for the future of our profession. Because of a lack of funding, our infrastructure system is declining. In addition, the massive growth many counties are experiencing in the unincorporated areas is worsening the problem at an alarming rate.

Our state has enjoyed significant economic expansion in the last decade. And, most of the new industries recruited in that time span have located in the rural areas of our state. Though many counties received federal and state assistance with the construction of the infrastructure necessary for these industries, none of us can bank on state or federal help to maintain these transportation avenues.

Finally, our future will be shaped by the public's lack of understanding of our role and the limitations we face. In general, the taxpayers have little understanding of how their gasoline and diesel fuel tax money is allocated. Likewise, they have little knowledge of the responsibilities of the county engineer and the direct impact we have on their lives. Educating the members of the general public, so they will support our efforts, is another challenge as we look to the future.

As I said at the outset, our limited time at the retreat prevented us from organizing solutions for these significant challenges. No doubt our effectiveness in the future will depend upon the quality of the solutions we uncover and whether or not we focus our collective energy on solving these problems.

Establishing the list is a significant first step, and we've taken that first step.

This Association has a record of achievement. Honestly, we've consistently been unafraid to tackle even the toughest of problems and we've been willing to help each other and to forge solutions that have been in the best interest of all counties and all county engineers.

In the years to come, our commitment, expertise and abilities will be challenged by the problems we identified as well as the solutions we design. As your president, my focus will be to get the ball rolling so that we'll be able to overcome these challenges and the many others that we didn't even identify.

### HAVE YOU MADE YOUR PLANS?

**ACCA's Legislative Conference** is just around the corner. Have you made your plans to attend? If not, we've included a registration form in this newsletter for your convenience. The deadline for early registration is **Friday, Nov. 14**, and registration cancellations after Friday, Nov. 28, will not be refunded. Early registration is **\$125** per person. (Registration after Nov. 14 is **\$150** per person.)

While the deadline to acquire rooms at the Renaissance Ross Bridge Resort has already passed, accommodations have been made at the Hyatt Place Hoover, which is about 10 miles from the host hotel. Rooms are **\$129** and can be reserved by calling (205) 988-8444. The deadline for hotel reservations at Hyatt Place is **Tuesday, Nov. 18**.

**ACEA 2008-09  
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EIT Rep – Houston County

**PAST PRESIDENTS**

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

**ACCA Announces Dates for District Meetings and County Commission Days**

With the 2009 Legislative Session just around the corner, the Association staff wants to make sure all ACCA members are prepared for what's ahead in the coming months.



During the three-week period set aside for **ACCA's District Meetings**, county officials and employees gather to discuss legislative and other important issues.

Please mark your calendars for the meeting that is most convenient for you. **All meetings will begin at 6 p.m.** A registration form and specific locations will be available soon. All county commissioners, chairpersons, clerk/administrators, engineers, county attorneys, EMA directors, county revenue officers, and 9-1-1 directors should plan to attend the district meetings.

**Monday, Jan. 5, 2009** .....Jasper, Ala. (Walker County)

**Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2009**.....Decatur, Ala. (Morgan County)

**Thursday, Jan. 8, 2009**.....Gadsden, Ala. (Etowah County)

**Monday, Jan. 12, 2009**.....Linden, Ala. (Marengo County)

**Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2009** .....Clanton, Ala. (Chilton County)

**Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2009** .....Clayton, Ala. (Barbour County)

**County Commission Days** are scheduled during the Legislative Session to give counties the opportunity to come to Montgomery and lobby on Association measures. *This is your county's opportunity to have a sure presence in Montgomery during the Regular Legislative Session.*

Mark your calendar to attend your district's County Commission Day. Participants should convene at the ACCA office for a briefing before visiting the State House.

**Tuesday, Feb. 17, at 11 a.m. – District 8:** Bullock, Chambers, Clay, Coosa, Lee, Macon, Randolph, Russell and Tallapoosa Counties

**Thursday, Feb. 19, at 9 a.m. – Districts 10 and 12:** Baldwin, Butler, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Escambia, Marengo, Mobile, Monroe, Washington and Wilcox Counties

**Tuesday, March 24, at 11 a.m. – Districts 7 and 9:** Autauga, Calhoun, Cleburne, Elmore, Lowndes, Montgomery, Shelby and Talladega Counties

**Tuesday, March 31, at 11 a.m. – District 11:** Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Geneva, Henry, Houston and Pike Counties

**April 8 and 9 – County Day** at the Legislature at the Alabama Activity Center in Downtown Montgomery

**Tuesday, April 21, at 11 a.m. – Districts 2 and 4:** Blount, Cullman, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Morgan and St. Clair Counties

**Tuesday, May 5, at 11 a.m. – Districts 5 and 6:** Bibb, Chilton, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Jefferson, Perry, Pickens, Sumter and Tuscaloosa Counties

**Thursday, May 7, at 9 a.m. – Districts 1 and 3:** Cherokee, Colbert, DeKalb, Etowah, Fayette, Franklin, Jackson, Lamar, Lauderdale, Marion, Marshall, Walker and Winston Counties

# 2008 FALL Meeting

Nov. 20-21, 2008 • Wynlakes Country Club • Montgomery, Ala. • REGISTER TODAY!

## ACEA FALL MEETING AGENDA

### THURSDAY, NOV. 20, 2008

**9:30 – 10:30 a.m.**

Registration, Wynlakes Country Club

**10:30 – 10:45 a.m.**

Welcome, Ed Phillips

**10:45 – 11:15 a.m.**

ACCA Update, Sonny Brasfield

**11:15 – 11:45 a.m.**

ALDOT Update, Ed Phillips

**11:45 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

**1 – 1:15 p.m.**

Comments, Joe McInnes, Don Vaughn and Don Arkle

**1:15 – 1:30 p.m.**

FHWA Update, Mark Bartlett

**2 – 2:30 p.m.**

Bridge Repair, Maintenance and Inspection, Eric Christie

**2:30 – 3 p.m.**

Cogongrass Control, Howard Peavey

**3 – 3:30 p.m.**

BREAK

**3:30 – 4 p.m.**

FDR Project Experience in the Sixth Division, David Bollie

**4 – 4:30 p.m.**

Construction Inflation, Skip Powe

**4:30 – 5 p.m.**

GIS Application for Counties, David Palmer

**6 – 7:30 p.m.**

DINNER, Wynlakes Country Club

### FRIDAY, NOV. 21, 2008

**8 – 10 a.m.**

County Transportation Bureau Update

**8 – 8:30 a.m.**

Procedural Guidelines, Mack Lovelady

**8:30 – 9 a.m.**

HRRRP Update, Brad Lindsey

**9 – 9:30 a.m.**

Maintenance Issues, Don Harris

**9:30 – 10 a.m.**

Agreements, Letting and Awards, Ed Austin

**10 – 10:15 a.m.**

BREAK

**10:15 – 10:45 a.m.**

Test Reports, Etc., Charlie Brown

**10:45 – 11:15 a.m.**

Asphalt Laydown, Jeff Benefield

**11:15 – 11:45 a.m.**

Work Zone Traffic Control, Jason Daniels

**11:45 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

Questions

**12 p.m.**

ADJOURN

## 2008 ACEA Fall Meeting Registration Form

County Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Completing Form: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration fee is **\$50** per person. \$\_\_\_\_\_ Total amount enclosed. **Please do not ask ACEA to bill you.**

List the name and title of those registering for the Fall Meeting. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Please note that cancellations will not be refunded after Friday, Nov. 14.*

# 2008 LEGISLATIVE Conference

Dec. 10-11, 2008 • Renaissance Ross Bridge • Hoover, Ala. • REGISTER TODAY!

## ACEA BREAKOUT AGENDA

- **Update from the Alabama Department of Transportation**  
*Ed Phillips, Alabama Department of Transportation, County Division*
- **Charging for Damage to County Roads and Bridges**  
*Tim Graves, County Engineer, Etowah County*
- **“Call-Before-You-Dig” Legislation**  
*Annette Reburn, Alabama OneCall*

## 2008 ACCA Legislative Conference Registration Form

County or Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Completing Form: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

ACCA member registration is **\$125** per person **before Nov. 14**. (After Nov. 14, registration is \$150 per person.) *Company registration is \$175 per person.*

\$\_\_\_\_\_ Total amount enclosed. **Please do not ask ACCA to bill you.**

**List below those you are registering for the conference.** Please indicate if each person is a (C) Commissioner, (CA) Clerk/Administrator, (CE) County Engineer, (ACE) Assistant County Engineer, (EIT) Engineer in Training, (AAEM) Emergency Management, (CROAA) County Revenue Officer, (AAND) E-911, (G) Guest or (S) Spouse.

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*Please note that cancellations will not be refunded after Friday, Nov. 28.*

**Please return completed form and check payable to ACCA by Nov. 14, 2008, to:**

**ACCA Legislative Conference • 100 N. Jackson Street • Montgomery, Ala. 36104 • Fax (334) 263-7678**