



**Past President's Message**



Dear ASCE Northwest Branch Members:

As a tumultuous election season draws to a close, most of us who depend on a vibrant infrastructure program were at least marginally influenced by the candidate who we felt would best identify and execute a robust program while in office. Typical of the transition periods between Washington election cycles, we now are in the waiting process to hear about how the new political regime will manage various aspects of policy. Regardless of whether your particular candidate won or lost, as members of ASCE we recognize that every family, every community, and every business needs a solid infrastructure to thrive. Therefore, with each new administration the infrastructure discussion is of the utmost importance and one in which partisan support can be closed aligned.

Some people who are removed from the infrastructure discussion may not recognize this fact, but ASCE has a powerful voice around state, local, and federal governments. Every four years, for example, ASCE produces a widely read and tremendously important report on the status of the US infrastructure. (<http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/>) Known as the ASCE Report Card for American's Infrastructure, ratings are produced by the report and follow an alphabetical grading system similar to what is seen in academic report cards. An Advisory Council of ASCE members assigns the grades according to the following eight criteria: capacity, condition, funding, future need, operation and maintenance, public safety, resilience, and innovation. Since 1998, the grades have been near failing, averaging only Ds, due to delayed maintenance and underinvestment across most categories. Individual ratings in Hazardous Waste, Levees, Wastewater, Bridges, Ports, Rails, Roads, etc. hover around the D+ to C- range quite consistently. The latest report estimates that a total of \$3.6 trillion dollars is necessary to invest by the year 2020 or the degradation may suddenly become a drag on the economy.

As members of ASCE, we have a great opportunity and platform for our singular voices to collectively draw attention to infrastructure needs. Not only as individuals who rely on a sound infrastructure but as engineers who uniquely recognize the consequences of failing infrastructure, I believe we have the responsibility to ensure our elected officials understand equally. ASCE offers many ways to do this whether you want to get involved locally or even nationally. Please contact one of us on the board to learn more about how to actively advocate on behalf of our infrastructures needs. Having just gone through an election cycle, doing this now is more important than ever!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Binsfeld".

Mike Binsfeld  
Northwest Branch Past President

mikebinsfeld@jfbrennan.com

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Check your emails from the Northwest Branch for all upcoming conferences, construction site visits, socials, outreach programs, and volunteer opportunities. The board is working diligently on lining up a great winter and spring of ASCE events!

## PAST EVENTS

### STEM EDUCATION – Exploration for Boys at UW - Stevens Point



Dan Borchardt, Andy Walters and Abby Bernhagen, Civil Engineers, recently assisted UW–Stevens Point with its STEM Exploration Day for Boys, where there were hands-on exhibits and presentations to explain STEM careers. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Northwest Branch donated the supplies for the event.

Approximately 332 boys from 23 schools attended the event that began in the UW-Stevens Point Dreyfus University Laird Room with various expo booths for the boys, grades 6-8, to explore before splitting into presentation classrooms where more hands-on activities took place.

Borchardt, Bernhagen and Andy Walters of American Engineering Testing, Wausau, worked with the boys in the morning session to explain the process of making asphalt using ingredients such as crushed-up Oreos, crushed graham crackers, crushed Reese's Pieces, ground up oatmeal flakes, and melted chocolate chips, each of which represented the ingredients used in the asphalt process.

Later in the day, the boys learned about assorted STEM topics from presenters who offered various exhibits. Borchardt, Bernhagen, and Walters showed participants how to use creative thinking to construct a “crash cushion” that could “catch” an egg when dropped from various heights without the egg breaking. Their building supplies were a package of straws and a roll of tape. The greatest challenge was to drop an egg from 15ft and keep it from cracking.



"We had a lot of great feedback from the surveys that the boys completed and UWSP was again very happy and thankful for our efforts at this event," Bernhagen said.

The event took place in the UW-Stevens Point Dreyfus University Laird room before splitting out into presentation classrooms where hands on activities were performed with the kids from grades 6-8. During the morning exhibit we worked with kids explaining the difference between concrete and asphalt and simulated the batch plant process by making asphalt and concrete cookies. During the 3 presentations throughout the day we explained the different engineering careers, how they all fit together, talked about the design process and proceeded to challenge them to build a skyscraper with limited supplies and time. UW Steven's Point heard a lot of great feedback from our presentations was very happy and thankful for our efforts at the event and want us to return at the February STEM exploration Day for girls.



## Dresbach Bridge Tour

On Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, the Northwest Branch toured the recently completed Dresbach I-90 crossing over the Mississippi River! The tour, which was led by the Minnesota Department of Transportation took the group in areas of the new bridge that are typically off limits during its service life. Inside the bridge spans, large post tensioned cables can be seen running the length of the bridge which had to be installed with trolleys during the balanced cantilevered cast in place construction process. The DOT talked about the challenges encountered during the \$182 million dollar, 4 year project and the ultimate successes achieved.





**Fast Facts:**

- 100 year design life
- Length: 2593 ft
- Width: approximately 45-66 ft
- Future bike access and pedestrian expansions
- Color blends in with the natural limestone bluffs



**Special thanks to the Minnesota DOT for taking the time to show the group around the project!**

**Lot “C” Tour**



The Northwest Branch held a tour of what’s called the Lot C project in downtown La Crosse on August 26th. The project is a mixed use development consisting of retail space, office lease space, apartments and parking. The tour was guided by the project manager from C.D. Smith, the general contractor. Fifteen ASCE members and guests were in attendance for the tour and were able to walk through and learn about the construction methods for the different aspects of the project.

Some highlights of the tour include walking through the underground parking area, viewing the different floor layouts for the apartments, and walking out on the apartment balconies to watch the ongoing construction of the steel frame office space. The tour concluded with a walk through of a finished model apartment overlooking downtown La Crosse with views of the Mississippi River and bluffs beyond. Following the tour those in attendance were treated to pizza. Everyone was able to relax and enjoy a meal with fellow members while sharing their experiences in civil engineering.



## La Crosse Loggers Game



*On Monday August 8<sup>th</sup>, the Northwest Branch held a social event at Copeland Park in La Crosse to watch the Loggers. The event was a great success which included beautiful weather, great company, and exciting baseball. We look forward to many more of these events around our geographic region. If you weren't able to make it due to schedule, driving distances, or whatever reason, keep a look-out for an event near you. **We certainly encourage any ideas from our membership for new and exciting social events!***

## Renew your ASCE Membership for 2016!

Please check to make sure your ASCE membership hasn't been put on the back burner. Hopefully this list has provided more than one memory of how ASCE membership has provided value to your engineering career and personal life. Please feel free to share your experience with a co-worker or friend. Online, in person, and wherever your membership takes you, ASCE benefits every Civil Engineer. See the ways you benefit from your ASCE membership at [asce.org/101](http://asce.org/101).

[Keep your benefits and renew today!](#)



And remember not only what ASCE provides for you...

- *Professional Development = Northwest Branch directors will be organizing meetings that help us explore the variety of influence civil engineers have while the Section Annual Meeting and Spring Technical Conference provide additional learning environments*
- *Networking = meetings and conferences bring together knowledgeable engineers that could provide assistance to your next civil engineering hurdle*
- *Personal savings = discount car insurance, rental car savings for the next family vacation, bank resources*
- *Good Citizenship = ASCE can provide the environment to teach others ways to make this country stronger through improvements to our environment*

...but how you can leverage your education and engineering experience to change the life of a potential aspiring engineer through ASCE outreach and STEM education opportunities!

## UPDATE ASCE ONLINE PROFILE REGULARLY

Please update your ASCE online profile with current E-mail and mailing addresses to guarantee you receive ASCE newsletters and important information. As a reminder, those of you that have passed your PE exam, make sure to change your account with ASCE National. To update your ASCE profile, go to [www.asce.org](http://www.asce.org) or call (800) 548-272.

## 2016 Calendar of Events

The calendar is simply a guide and may change throughout the year

### November 2016:

- Northwest Branch Board Meeting

### December:

- Northwest Branch Board Meeting

### January:

- Northwest Branch Board Meeting

### February:

- Northwest Branch Board Meeting
- Girls STEM event – UW Stevens Point.

### September 2017:

- **Northwest Branch Hosts the Wisconsin Section Annual Meeting (28<sup>th</sup>)**

**CURRENT NORTHWEST BRANCH OFFICERS**

**President:** Kris Roppe, I&S Group, Inc.: La Crosse; [kris.roppe@is-grp.com](mailto:kris.roppe@is-grp.com)

**President-Elect:** TBD

**Secretary-Treasurer:**

Andy Walters, American Engineering Testing, Inc., Wausau, WI; [awalters@amengtest.com](mailto:awalters@amengtest.com)

**Past President: Wisconsin Section Northwest Branch Representative:**

Mike Binsfeld - J.F. Brennan Company: La Crosse, WI; [mikebinsfeld@jfbrennan.com](mailto:mikebinsfeld@jfbrennan.com)

**Northwest Branch Directors-At-Large:**

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Evan Berglund - Krech Ojard & Associates, Inc.; Eau Claire: (715) 553-7374

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