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A Message from the President

In last month's newsletter I provided an update on what ASCE had been working on from a political perspective. For the month of March there has been quite a bit of activity in this area both nationally and locally.

Nationally, ASCE released the 2021 Report Card for America's Infrastructure on March 2nd in conjunction with the Annual Legislative Fly-In. For those who may be unfamiliar with this report I would encourage you to visit the following website to learn more about it (<https://infrastructurereportcard.org/>). The information provided in this report card was used to communicate ASCE's priorities in planned meetings and events associated with the Legislative Fly-In later in the week.

While the Legislative Fly-In has historically been held in person, due to COVID, this year's events were held virtually. For me personally this was my first year participating in the Legislative Fly-In, and I had the opportunity to meet with the offices of one of our State Senators, and one House member. One of the things that impressed me the most was the level of understanding of the issues related to infrastructure that ASCE is advocating for. It is also encouraging to see that infrastructure is a bi-partisan issue that has been given high priority. This is evidenced in some of the additional proposed bills we continue to hear about in the news.

Finally, at the state level ASCE has been tracking two Senate Bills that have the potential to impact professional licensure in Arizona, Senate Bills 1062 and 1304. ASCE did take official positions on both of these bills in opposition to the proposed language. Jose Aguilar, the current AZ Section President Elect, and I both had the opportunity to speak in front of the House Commerce Committee on SB 1062 expressing our concerns. While the bill was passed, I was impressed with the concerns and questions raised by the committee members. Ultimately this bill passed both the House and the

Senate, and was signed into law by the Governor on March 18th. We also continue to track Senate Bill 1304 which we understand will not be brought forward for additional action.

While some of these experiences over the last couple of months are relatively new to me, I have found them extremely rewarding. As a Registered Professional Engineer in Arizona I think we should all take an interest in State and Federal legislation that has the potential to impact our profession. I would encourage anyone with this interest to reach out to your ASCE branch leaders to learn how they can become more involved.

President Biden Unveils Infrastructure Plan

Caroline Sevier, Director, Government Relations ASCE

President Biden has unveiled his long-awaited infrastructure plan, calling on what he describes as a generational investment in our nation's most critical assets and the largest infrastructure package that this country has seen in over five decades. The \$2.2 trillion, eight-year, [American Jobs Plan](#) will go a long way to ensure that our nation's infrastructure continues to improve in the upcoming decade and ASCE applauds President Biden his truly historic proposal.

Overall, the President's plan invests an additional 1 percent of GDP per year over eight years to upgrade our nation's infrastructure, revitalize manufacturing, invest in basic research and science, shore up supply chains, and solidify our care infrastructure. Additionally, the focus is rightly on tackling the maintenance backlog for our transportation, water, and freight systems, enabling "shovel worthy" ideas to get across the finish line, ensuring new projects result in systems that are more resilient, investing in transmission lines to connect the grid, and reflects that our infrastructure is truly a connected system that is only as strong as its weakest link. Therefore, beyond raising the [ASCE Report Card for America's Infrastructure](#) grades, the investments proposed in the American Jobs Plan could result in long-term economic gains for American families and businesses.

The American Jobs Plan would cut significantly into the 10-year, [\\$2.59 trillion](#) funding gap that ASCE has identified and ensures that the federal government is working with state and local governments to make these much-needed investments. As the nation looks to revitalize and jumpstart the economy after the COVID-19 downturn, ASCE believes that infrastructure investment is the key to long-term recovery and prosperity, as well as providing access and opportunity to communities across the country.

Some of the highlights of the bill that tie directly to ASCE priorities include:

- **\$621 billion in transportation infrastructure and resilience.**
 - \$115 billion to **modernize the bridges, highways, roads, and main streets** that are in most critical need of repair.
 - \$20 billion to improve **road safety** for all users.
 - \$85 billion to **modernize existing transit**.
 - \$80 billion to address **Amtrak's repair backlog**.
 - \$174 billion investment in the **EV market**.
 - \$25 billion in our **airports, including funding for the Airport Improvement Program**
 - \$17 billion in **inland waterways, coastal ports, land ports of entry, and ferries, which are all essential to our nation's freight**.
 - \$20 billion for a new program that will **reconnect neighborhoods** cut off by historic transportation investments.
 - \$25 billion for a dedicated fund to support **ambitious projects** that have tangible benefits to the regional or national economy but are too large or complex for existing funding programs.
 - \$50 billion in dedicated investments to improve **infrastructure resilience** with a focus

- on safeguarding critical infrastructure and defending vulnerable communities.
- **\$111 billion to rebuild drinking water infrastructure:**
 - Replace **100% of lead drinking water lines** with \$45 billion EPA investment through the drinking water state revolving loan fund and Water Infrastructure Improvements for the National Act grants.
 - \$10 billion to monitor and remediate **PFAS**.
 - \$56 billion in grants and loans to **upgrade and modernize drinking water, wastewater and stormwater systems**.
- **\$100 billion for power infrastructure:**
 - An expanded direct-pay investment tax credit and production tax credit for clean energy generation and storage.
 - \$16 billion to **plug orphan oil and gas wells and cleaning up abandoned mines**.
 - **\$5 billion investment in the remediation and redevelopment of Brownfield and Superfund sites**.
- **\$100 billion to upgrade and build new public schools, especially improving indoor air quality and ventilation**.
- **\$100 billion to reach 100 percent high-speed broadband coverage** and make such coverage affordable.
- **\$35 billion investment in research into climate science**.

As we look ahead, it is important to note that Congress still needs to develop and introduce legislation, so the American Jobs Plan is a starting point and many still hope for bipartisan legislation. However, due to the proposed pay-fors, primarily a roll-back of the Trump era corporate tax cuts, many expect that Democrats will attempt to move the plan under budget reconciliation procedures to improve the chances of passage. If Congress does move the bill under budget reconciliation, it means that the infrastructure package will not be able to contain the surface transportation reauthorization bill's policy changes, and that bill will need to move separately before the FAST Act expires on September 30th. The surface transportation reauthorization and addressing the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund will also require its own pay-for, as the Highway Trust Fund will not be able to support a multi-year bill at the current gas tax rate.

What we do know is that the upcoming weeks and months will be critical as Congress debates a final bill. President Biden's proposal is one of the first opportunities in years to see significant investments in our nation's infrastructure and ASCE looks forward to working with both the Administration and Members of Congress on this crucial, bipartisan, issue.

Find out more information and get involved by visiting [ASCE](#).

Phoenix Branch News

Joseph Dietrick, PE, M.ASCE, Vice President, Phoenix Branch

On Wednesday, March 10, 2021, the Phoenix Branch of ASCE hosted a virtual luncheon meeting. At this meeting the Phoenix Branch presented its annual awards for the Government Engineer of the Year, Large Project of the Year and Small Project of the Year. The projects were judged and scored by eight Life Members of the Phoenix Branch.

Two people were nominated for Government Employee of the Year: John Ferrin Crosby, PE County Engineer/Public Works Director for Apache County and Patty Kennedy, PE Deputy Water Services Director/Wastewater Engineering for the City of Phoenix. In a close vote the judges selected Patty Kennedy for this award. Patty has Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Colorado State University and a Master's in Business Administration from the Arizona State University W.P. Carey School of Business. She has been with the City of Phoenix for over 20 years, all in the Water Services Department. Over the last 6 years Patty has managed a 5-year CIP in excess of \$1.7 B with a staff of

33, comprised mostly of engineers or engineering technicians. The Phoenix Branch is proud to present this award to such a competent and dedicated public engineer.

There were two nomination for the Large Project of the Year (>\$10 million). They were the Loop 202 South Mountain Freeway and the Greenfield Water Reclamation Plant Phase III Expansion Project. In another close vote the Life Members selected the Greenfield Water Reclamation Plant Phase III Expansion as the Large Project of the Year. The Loop 202 South Mountain Freeway project team consisted of WSP USA, Stanley Consultants, Aztec Engineering, Fluor-Granite-Ames JV, Maricopa Association of Governments, City of Phoenix and ADOT. The Greenfield Water Reclamation Plant Phase III Expansion project team consisted Carollo Engineers, Inc., Brown and Caldwell McCarthy Building Companies, Inc., City of Mesa, Town of Gilbert and Town of Queen Creek.

SPA-1 Influent Structure Replacement and Improvements Project was the only project submitted for the Small Project of the Year (<\$10 million). The project team consisted of GHD, Inc., Felix Construction Company and the City of Surprise.

Presentations were provided by the two project winners. Recordings of these presentations can be found on the Arizona Section website.

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