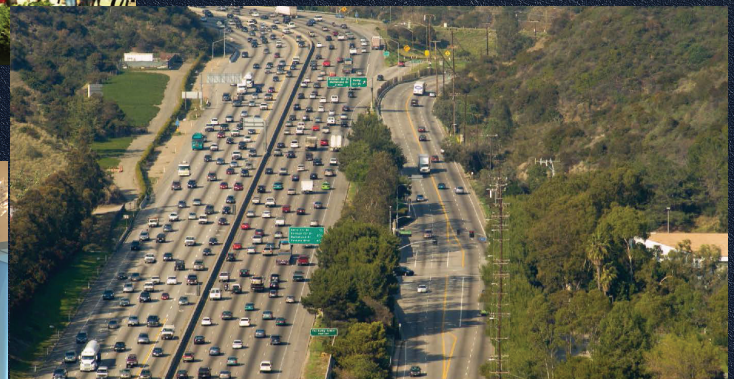


ACEC  
California  
Los Angeles County Chapter

# ACEC Chapter Awards 2019 - 2020



Metro

Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project  
P3

DELIVERING RESULTS IN YEARS,  
NOT DECADES





December 18, 2020



*California*

*Los Angeles County Chapter*

Christian Anger  
Membership Director  
ACEC California Office  
1303 J Street, Suite 450  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: ACEC CA Los Angeles County Chapter  
2019-2020 Chapter Awards Submission

Dear Mr. Anger:

The ACEC CA Los Angeles County Chapter (ACEC LA) strives to be the most effective chapter in the state by uniting its members to help support statewide legislation, local legislation, business opportunities, emerging technologies and industry trends. In light of our vision for the 2019 - 2020 year to recognize and place the engineering consulting industry as the key delivery driver of the current and ongoing infrastructure revolution and transformation occurring in Los Angeles, our goals were to strengthen our position as a trusted industry advisor and go-to organization for legislative issues. We also strived to influence and support the sustainability and relevancy of ACEC through increased participation by diverse and young professionals.

We achieved these goals through strengthened engagement and outreach with local government agencies, member firms and the public, which resulted in increased participation in active ACEC-LA liaison committees, collaboration with Metro's public procurement process, continued leadership in industry best practices for engineering consulting with the ports and cities throughout Los Angeles County and increased social media presence and meeting attendance by a diverse next generation of engineers.

With 109 member firms, we remain one of the largest chapters in California, continually reaching out to our community and increasing our chapter FTE participation. There are 25 firms represented on our local board. They are made up of a cross section of small, medium and large firms whose representatives work monthly to facilitate ACEC-LA's success.

This submittal showcases our successful results by highlighting our efforts to promote the engineering industry locally and our commitment to public outreach and improving business practices. We are dedicated to initiating programs and activities that will secure a new level of achievement in the industry and make ACEC membership a valuable asset for existing members while also encouraging others to join.

To achieve our mission and maintain our vision, we made some significant changes over this last year, including hiring a new Executive Director and developing a brand new website. As you are aware, the pandemic hit our community hard earlier this year and continues to challenge our industry but as a chapter we have stayed strong to our roots and commitment to our community. We made adjustments in order to continue to support our members and provide top notch service to our member firms during this challenging time.

We appreciate your consideration of ACEC LA for the 2019-2020 Chapter Award for Large Chapters. If you have any questions, please contact me, 2019-2020 Chapter President, Shahram Vahdat, by phone at (213) 808-2352 or by email at [svahdat@hntb.com](mailto:svahdat@hntb.com).

Sincerely,

Shahram Vahdat  
ACEC-LA President, 2010-2020

# *Chapter Awards*

## *July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020*

### **Official Entry Form for All Chapters**

**DEADLINE:** December 18, 2020

**CHAPTER NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CHAPTER PRESIDENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NUMBER OF CHAPTER FIRMS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NUMBER OF CHAPTER FTE'S:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **SECTION 1**

*(ACEC California provided the information below)*

**1. Number of Chapter Individuals serving on ACEC California committees: (10 pts)** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Number of committee calls attended by a Chapter representative out of total number of calls possible: (10 pts)**

a. Membership Development Committee:

\_\_\_\_\_

b. Grassroots Committee:

\_\_\_\_\_

c. Chapter Officers Calls:

\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Number of State Directors attending ACEC California Board of Director Meetings out of total number of State Director representation possible: (15 pts)** \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Number of Chapter Members attending the 2019 Strategic Summit (formerly Annual Conference): (10 pts)** \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Percentage of Federal PAC National Goal reached by Chapter (based on prior calendar year): (10pts)** \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Percentage of individual participants in National PAC donations (Individual v. Chapter FTE): (10pts)** \_\_\_\_\_

# *Chapter Awards*

## *July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020*

### **SECTION 2**

Please complete the section below for your chapter.

**Chapter Representative Completing Application:** Shahram Vahdat, President 2019-2020

**Phone Number:** 213-808-2352      **Email:** svahdat@hntb.com

#### **ESSAY QUESTION (80 pts)**

On a separate sheet **(3 pages max)** please provide an essay that describes how your Chapter has addressed the following:

- Enhanced public awareness of services provided by member firms through PR, recruitment efforts and special events. Does your chapter have a scholarship program? How much did you award through scholarship?
- How your Chapter has successfully promoted the industry locally and participated in improving business practices, i.e. involvement in environmental enhancements such as Earth Day, LEED, Envision, local business association participation/involvement, etc.
- How many times in the last program year has your Chapter has met with local elected officials and local appointed officials. Did your Chapter hold any match fundraising events for legislative candidates or local measures?
- Does your Chapter have an independent website? How often is your website updated?
- How does your Chapter communicate and engage the membership (i.e. chapter meeting programs, special events, newsletter, etc)?
- How has your Chapter adjusted to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic? How has your Chapter continued to engage members?

#### **CHAPTER CHAMPION (20 pts)**

Who in your chapter has contributed most to goals and directives of ACEC California? How has this individual helped in promoting the profession, growing membership, assisting ACEC California's goals and worked to improve the design consulting profession in California and locally?



The ACEC CA Los Angeles County Chapter (ACEC LA) has been successful in promoting the industry and enhancing public awareness of services. Key achievements this year include hiring a new Executive Director with industry knowledge and continued public awareness through a newly developed website. We also continue to work with our agency liaison committees with a growing number of members and member firms.

## **PROMOTING INDUSTRY LOCALLY**

**Monthly Luncheons/Webinars** - Our chapter has a thriving monthly luncheon program that brings owners together with the consulting engineering community. Owners present their upcoming capital improvement and expansion programs and contracting opportunities. This past year, we hosted ten monthly luncheon events featuring speakers from owner organizations such as City of Los Angeles, Ports of Long Beach & Los Angeles, California High Speed Rail, LAWA, Caltrans District 7, Metro Regional Rail, Virgin Hyperloop, Metro Program Management Group, CalSTA, and Metro Innovation Group.

**Golf Tournament** - In March, ACEC LA had to cancel our annual charity golf tournament at the Old Ranch Country Club in Seal Beach due to the pandemic. We were able to reschedule our tournament to May 2021 and 22 of the 25 foursomes who were to participate agreed to transfer their funds to 2021 and 9 out of 11 sponsors who were to participate agreed to transfer their funds to 2021. Therefore, we were still able to give out \$20,000 in scholarships in 2020 and 2021.

## **ENHANCED PUBLIC AWARENESS**

### **Student Outreach**

Committed to offering opportunities to the next generation of engineers and surveyors, ACEC LA promoted student education through our provision of scholarships and participation in National Engineers Week.

**National Engineers Week** - With the help of our member firms, ACEC Los Angeles County Chapter in partnership with Los Angeles County and Caltrans had 23 engineers present to 15 schools throughout Los Angeles County!

**Scholarships** - Established in 2005, the scholarship fund rewards qualified undergraduate and graduate engineering students attending Los Angeles County colleges and universities. Recipients must demonstrate a high level of academic achievement from an accredited engineering program; participate in professional associations, programs and internships directly related to engineering; and provide recommendations and endorsements from faculty. This

year, we awarded six scholarships totaling \$20,000. The scholarship amounts ranged from \$2,000 to \$5,000. Please visit our new website at <https://acec-la.org/> to view the videos of each of our scholarship recipients.

### **Public Relations/ Website**

ACEC LA maintains positive public relations with our membership, the consultant community and owner agencies in the Los Angeles County area by providing opportunities for networking, professional development and relationship-building. We developed a brand new website earlier this year and unveiled it in April 2020. We have received many positive reviews from our members and others who visit the site. Our Social Media Committee's social media presence includes public information and positive outreach via pages on three platforms (LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook). Today, our dedicated LinkedIn account includes 121 followers, Twitter account includes 163 followers, and 70 followers of our Facebook page.

### **Recruitment Efforts**

With outstanding membership growth and participation, our chapter's recruiting efforts include welcoming non-members at monthly luncheons and retaining members through successful programming. Our success is evidenced by event attendance growth from 30 attendees per event in 2005 to an average of more than 80 attendees per event this year even with the pandemic. We have been able to move our programs to webinars which have had higher attendance than even our in person luncheons.

### **Special Events**

**Annual Banquet** - This was the event that was hardest hit by the pandemic. Originally scheduled to be in late April 2020 we had to cancel the event completely as an in person event of over 300 attendees and six awardees. We worked with the committee to figure out another way to give out the awards late this year. The committee is currently working with the four main awardees of ENGINEERING ACHIEVEMENT: AECOM HUNT/Turner Joint Venture & City of Inglewood for the LA Rams Chargers SoFi Stadium; CLIENT OF THE YEAR: Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Program Management Group; INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR: City and Port of Long Beach P3 City Hall/Port Headquarters Complex Project; and CHAMPION OF SMALL BUSINESS: Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) to put on a virtual awards cocktail hour in late January 2021. We will be delivering the awards to each of the award recipients and will be raising a toast and presenting the awards virtually. We look forward to this event in 2021.

## IMPROVING BUSINESS PRACTICES

### Small Business Committee

ACEC LA's Small Business Committee helps our small businesses maximize the benefits of ACEC membership. This year the committee held committee meetings that discussed and informed our small businesses on current trends, important issues that architecture and engineering firms need to address in the development of their financial systems, payment provisions and insurance provisions, as well as actions that firms can take to enhance the quality of company operations and financial stability.

### Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) Committee

The QBS committee continued to build on the momentum created by the ACEC California initiative in early 2018, with a focus on how QBS laws should be applied at the local level and how QBS benefits our members and their clients. The QBS Committee met multiple times and at the end of this year, in July 2020, the committee developed a joint QBS webinar panel with APWA So Cal Chapter that included over 200 attendees and 35 Southern California agencies.

### Liaison Committees

ACEC LA's liaison committees provide a forum for members and owners to discuss current and future design and construction programs as well as other industry issues and concerns. Highlights from our liaison committees include: [Caltrans District 7](#) – This committee's meetings are held every other month and attended by large and small member firms. Over this last year attendance at these meetings has increased from an average of 25 to over 50 attendees per meeting. Topics this year included: ADA Updates, Design Standard Decision Document (DSDD), Connected and Automated Vehicles (C/AV), Caltrans Environmental Process for Consultants, Caltrans Complete Streets, COVID-19 Updates, AE Interview Attendee Certification, and Caltrans Asset Management.

[Metro](#) – Our most popular liaison committee, presentations are provided by executive directors and senior staff representing Metro departments including highways, transit planning, facilities engineering and procurement. Metro has also partnered with ACEC LA on procurement practices, new policies and board agenda items through active support of a procurement subcommittee focused solely on the discussion of ways to streamline their proposal process.

### State and National Participation

Our chapter members are active in ACEC state and national efforts that enhance our industry. Our chapter has 26 members serving on ACEC California committees, with five of them on the board of directors and one serving on the executive committee. We also have chapter members involved at the national level.

## Legislative Activities

Conflict of Interest legislation came into the forefront of the ACEC 2019 agenda. Assembly Member Sharon Quirk-Silva was the author that planned to bring the legislation to the floor. However, a fringe element of the building trades coalition opposed the bill and with the help of a news article from Cal Matters the legislation died and never made it to the floor for a vote in the 2019 session.

ACEC LA President Jesse Urquidi strategized with ACEC Gov Affairs Director Tyler Munzing as to what was the best way to address the issue and start conversations for the a new author and possibly "educate" key legislators for the 2020 legislative session. In December 2019, ACEC CA had an extra ticket to the Moderate Dem Caucus dinner in Carlsbad. Tyler Munzing invited Jesse Urquidi to attend and at that event Jesse and Tyler connected with several assembly members and senators including: Assm Blanca Rubio, Assm Rudy Salas, Assm Patrick O'Donnell, Assm Mike Gipson and Senator Steve Bradford.

In January 2020, Jesse also traveled to Sacramento and setup meetings for ACEC along with Tyler Munzing. The objective was to get the ACEC position on conflict-of-interest legislation. Jesse met with CA State Senator Lena Gonzalez, Assembly Member Patrick O'Donnell, CA Contact cities Exec Director, Marcel Rodarte, Senator Steven Bradford, Assemblywoman Blanca Rubio and Senator Susan Rubio

The trip was a success in that the ACEC team was able to educate and provide outreach to the organizations and legislative offices that we know would take a look at this legislation for future consideration.

## ADJUSTMENTS DUE TO THE PANDEMIC

Our chapter like others had to make adjustments starting in March of this year due to the pandemic. We had to reschedule our two big events, our golf tournament and awards banquet. But we did not let that stop us from awarding \$20,000 in student scholarships this year. We moved to virtual programs or webinars in May and started meeting with our liaison groups virtually as well. We were able to reach more members during this time with our virtual programs and even increased participation across the board. We implemented networking into our virtual meetings which helped our members not only stay connected but discuss important topics during this challenging time. Through our continued communications both on our website and social media channels we were able to get information to our members in a timely manner. We are continuing to look at new ways to engage our members and look forward to when we can see each other in person again.



## **ACEC LA CHAPTER CHAMPION**

I have nominated Jeff Walker as the LA Chapter Champion for the 2019-2020 year. Jeff has been an LA Chapter board member since 2012 and recently completed his service on the State Executive Committee and as National Director. Understanding the issues spearheaded by the ACEC state organization, communicating them to the local chapters, and taking the local chapters recommendations to the state board is a major duty of the State Directors. Though not a State Director for the LA Chapter, Jeff has used his role on the State Executive Committee be a strong champion for the LA County Chapter.

In his role on the State Executive Committee, Jeff has promoted the Civil Engineering profession, providing direct input on the bills that had a direct impact on consulting firms, and met with local and state officials to present pros and cons of the bills focusing on the civil engineering profession. As an active member of the Legislative Committees and the State PAC, Jeff has provided valuable input in promoting many challenging issues facing our profession including contracting out, qualifications based selection, prevailing wage, and fair contracting practices.

Jeff is a true believer of the ACEC mission to promote civil engineering consulting firms to make their contribution to make the United States of America in general and the state of California in particular a better and safer place to live. His "Can Do Attitude" and expressing it in professional meetings with other colleagues has resulted the growth in membership once other firms understood the benefit they would get by joining ACEC.

I am proud of having such a dedicated engineer in our LA Chapter board and believe he deserved to be our 2019-2020 Champion.

