Items included in this ACEC Missouri Weekly Update are listed below.

- **COVID-19 News** *(ACEC/MO COVID-19 Business Impact Survey Sent to Member Firms; Navigating the Waters of a Global Crisis as a Small Business Leader; New HR Considerations as Employees Work from Home)*
- **Industry News** *(ACEC Action Alert: Support a Robust Infrastructure Agenda to Promote Economic Recovery)*
- **Notable Events** *(ACEC Virtual Convention on April 25; ACEC Midwest States Conference)*
- **Member Information & Calendar** *(Reminders; Member News; Calendar of Events; Tip of the Week)*

If there is something you would like us to include in the weekly updates, or if you need anything else, please contact the ACEC/MO staff. We are working remotely so the best way to contact us is by email: Bruce Wylie (BruceWylie@acecmo.org) or Dawn Hill (DawnHill@acecmo.org). We would love to hear from you!

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### COVID-19 NEWS

**ACEC/MO COVID-19 Business Impact Survey Sent to Member Firms**

Earlier this week, we prepared an ACEC/MO COVID-19 Business Impact Survey and then emailed it out to the key contact at each member firm. If you received that email, please take time to complete the survey by the deadline of **May 1st**. The more firms that participate in the survey, the better we will see how COVID-19 is affecting Missouri firms. We’ll then compile the results and will post them on our website and will include an article in our Weekly Update.

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**Navigating the Waters of a Global Crisis as a Small Business Leader**

After coming off the best financial quarter in the company’s history, the COVID-19 pandemic suddenly shut down airports, crashed markets and halted an otherwise thriving economy – all the while claiming tens of thousands of lives around the world. It would have been easy to slip into panic mode; to make rash decisions because our company’s largest market segment - commercial airports - was now grounded. To look at the bottom line instead of into the eyes of my team members. But every crisis is ultimately about people, and I had to start thinking about how to protect my own. At Argus Consulting, we are focusing on these five pillars to weather this storm:
1. **Set your workforce up for success and keep a constant pulse on their wellbeing.** Our machine is our people. Our product is their expertise. Their health, safety and wellbeing are always at the top of our list. We quickly converted our team to remote work environments, and we’ve optimized productivity as they serve clients as well as ever. Sounds great right? Well, yes and no. It’s important to recognize that what your people are likely experiencing right now is actually fight or flight. While people, including myself, may seem to be our most productive right now, we can’t operate in this physiological state for too long before burnout sets in. So, we’re keeping a constant pulse on the organization, and empowering them to look out for each other. I think about “concussion protocol” from when my son played high school football. The person with the concussion doesn’t always realize that they’re acting “off,” but their teammates do. We’re not even at halftime of this crisis yet, so we must all continue to look out for each other.

2. **Do what engineers do best.** Engineers are natural problem solvers, and lucky for us, our company is full of them. We’re taking a very pragmatic approach to enduring this pandemic. We challenge ourselves to ask, “What’s the most important thing right now?” We tackle that problem or opportunity first and then move on to the next one. In such a volatile situation, you are at risk of analysis paralysis because new information pops up every day. You must act using the best information available to you at the time.

3. **Let your vision and your values guide decision-making.** Your core values help you make decisions and have empathy. They help us work through decisions. Our first value is Integrity. To me, Integrity means two things right now: making sure our team members know we have their backs and doing the right thing on behalf of our clients. Our vision of being the trusted leader in fuels systems engineering is our lens. Clients must know our vision hasn’t changed and that they can expect the same level of service and expertise that we’ve always delivered. And for us, that means approaching this crisis from our client’s perspective, watching out for their best interests and helping them navigate the challenges they face as they work to establish the new normal as industries and individuals.

4. **Reassess and establish new goalposts, and then shout them from the balcony.** While we enjoyed a prosperous first quarter, everyone knows 2020 isn’t going to be the year we thought it would be. But that doesn’t mean we throw in the towel. We reassess, establish new goalposts and rally the troops. I’ve challenged all my direct reports to “shout our revised goals from the balcony,” because people need to know there is still a lot worth fighting for. We are a diversified company that services various markets and client segments, and all of them have been affected in different ways by the pandemic. It’s our job to work with our clients, identify their needs and limitations and help them come out of this positioned for success.

5. **Embrace change and look for the light at the end of the tunnel.** Believe it or not, there is an end to this, and we should start preparing for who we want to be when we emerge. As engineering firms, we often get caught up in “billable work,” and we may not have as much of it right now as we used to. But that doesn’t mean we can’t spend time improving processes, cross-training on roles, or building proficiencies. When the new normal arrives, we want our organization to be stronger than before and ready to seize new opportunities. Speaking of the new normal, your company culture might be different post-pandemic. The whole world will likely act differently. What were the aspects of your culture that prospered during the pandemic? For us, so far, it has been becoming more transparent and increasing frequency of communication to really bring us together as a team, and we intend to find ways to preserve that long-term.

Being an engineer and the CEO of a small firm, I touch all aspects of the business. At the beginning of this, I thought I had to be perfect, and I quickly became overwhelmed. So, if I have one last piece of advice for other small firm leaders, it’s this: Let go of perfection. Instead, embrace your own humanity and be honest. Your people need that from you right now. People are the center of all crises. If we all take care of our own, we will get through this together.

*by Kent Bredehoeft, CEO of Argus Consulting, a Kansas City-based engineering firm with 26 years of expertise in fuel systems infrastructure*
New HR Considerations as Employees Work from Home

As employees work from home and are dealing with stress, anxiety, and isolation because of the COVID-19 pandemic, firms are handling HR issues that haven’t come up before. Below are some ways firms can help their staff.

**Employee assistance programs.** EAPs, which offer free and confidential counseling to employees who have personal or work-related problems, have been in high demand since the pandemic began. If your firm has one, remind your staff about the resource.

**Home office supply requests.** Because the need to work from home happened quickly and was not initially expected to last as long as it has, some employees may not have the supplies and equipment they need. As a result, they are asking employers to pay for those items. Reimbursement for everything from printer paper and toner cartridges, to chairs, to faster WiFi service. Some employers are repurposing their budgets to pay for work-from-home expenses. For example, companies that typically provide commuter assistance are choosing to automatically cover any expense requests up to the monthly transit they would normally provide.

**Flexibility with time.** With schools closed, firms have needed to relax what is typically a standard part of most telecommuting policies: that employees can’t care for children during working hours. Companies are being more understanding and people are working more in sporadic bursts to squeeze it all in with everything else. In addition to flexibility around hours worked, firms need to figure out if any changes or exceptions need to be made to their leave policies.

**Staying connected.** Having staff working from home is like having people in several little offices, rather than one big one, so it’s important to maintain connections during this time. It’s important to know that you cannot overcommunicate. Have regular check-ins and regularly scheduled interaction. Many people are doing virtual get togethers. You want lots of one-on-ones and social events, not just on the phone, but on video.

INDUSTRY NEWS

ACEC Action Alert: Support a Robust Infrastructure Agenda to Promote Economic Recovery

ACEC member action is requested to engage House and Senate lawmakers to support an economic recovery agenda that includes significant and sustainable investments in the nation’s critical infrastructure and regulatory reforms to move projects forward expeditiously.

**Click Here to Contact Your House and Senate Members**

While Congress needs to act to address near-term priorities to keep businesses afloat, ACEC and stakeholder allies are urging lawmakers to begin action on longer-term measures that will kick start the economy and sustain growth in the coming years. ACEC supports an agenda that includes a long-term reauthorization of the FAST Act with sustainable and growing revenues, passage of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) to authorize new Corps of Engineers water projects and more funding and financing mechanisms to support water and wastewater projects, and measures to support energy markets, vertical projects, and other priorities in the built environment.
NOTABLE EVENTS

ACEC Virtual Convention on April 25

ACEC will hold its Board of Directors meeting virtually on Saturday, April 25th from 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM Eastern. All ACEC members are invited to participate in the meeting where ACEC will welcome their Chair and ExCom members. Click here and bookmark this link to join the meeting.

ACEC Midwest States Conference

The ACEC Midwest State Conference (joint meeting with Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma) is scheduled for June 7-9, 2020 at the Chateau on the Lake in Branson. Below is a tentative schedule as we are finalizing details for the meeting. We hope to have registration information sent out next week.

We have a block of rooms reserved at the Chateau on the Lake. The room rate is $149+ per night. Contact the Chateau at 888-333-5253 to reserve your sleeping room before the deadline of May 7, 2020.

Please put these dates on your calendar on plan to join us in Branson!

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

**Sunday, June 7**
- 3:00 p.m. - Registration
- 5:00 p.m. - Welcoming Reception Cruise on Landing Princess

**Monday, June 8**
- 7:30 a.m. - Breakfast / Program on Transfer Leadership, Sell, or Shutter - Options Available to Firms in Transition (Speaker: Michael Hein, AIA, Chief Executive Officer, The HFW Companies)
- 9:00 a.m. - CEO Roundtables (large & small firms)
- 12:00 p.m. - Lunch / Speakers: Lydia R. Zabrycki, Director, ACEC Retirement Trust Education; and Lee Ann Wheeler, ACEC Business Insurance Trust
- 1:45 p.m. - ACEC State Meetings (Kansas, Missouri & Oklahoma)
- 6:00 p.m. - Multi-State Officers / Directors Reception & Banquet

**Tuesday, June 9**
- 7:30 a.m. - Breakfast / Program on Perpetual Pavements – A Long Term Solution (Speaker: Amy Miller, P.E., National Director, Asphalt Pavement Alliance)
- 9:00 a.m. - Mission and Activities of the Engineering Change Lab Seminar (Speaker: Michael P. McMeekin, P.E., Executive Director, ECL-USA)

MEMBER INFORMATION & CALENDAR

Reminders...

* ACEC/MO Committee Assignment Preference forms were recently emailed out and are due by May 7, 2020 to be considered for an ACEC/MO
committee in 2020-21. If you want to serve on a committee and didn't receive the committee assignment preference form, click [HERE](#) to download the form.

* ACEC/MO Board of Directors Ballot was also recently emailed to voting member representatives. The deadline to vote for those nominated for the 2020-21 Board of Directors is May 20, 2020.

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**Member News**

**McClure** announced that **Wes Minder**, P.E., joined the firm as a Project Manager for the transportation team. In his role, Minder will be helping the transportation team with new pursuits and additional services for Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Department of Transportation (DOT) projects. The firm also announced that they were named No. 120 to Inc. Magazine’s first-ever list of the 250 Fastest Growing Companies in the Midwest.

**Tepa, LLC** is pleased to announce that **Ty Abbott**, P.E., as the new Senior Project Manager for Tepa Engineering Services, LLC. Tepa ES is one of the Tepa Companies.

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**Calendar of Events**

- **April 25** -- ACEC Virtual Board of Directors Meeting
- **May 13-14** -- ACEC/MO Future Leaders Academy, St. Louis
- **June 7-9** -- ACEC Midwest States Conference, Branson
- **June 11-12** -- ACEC/MO Future Leaders Academy, Independence
- **August 21** -- ACEC/MO Summer Meeting, Columbia
- **October 14** -- ACEC/MO EEA Project Entry Deadline
- **October 19** -- ACEC/MO 4th Annual ACEC/PAC Golf Tournament, Columbia
- **October 28-31** -- ACEC Fall Conference, San Diego, CA
- **November 4** -- ACEC/MO EEA Judging
- **November 13** -- ACEC/MO Fall Meeting, Columbia

Newly added events are italicized. To see a complete calendar of events, go to ACEC/MO's website.

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**Tip of the Week**

**TIP: Don't just get organized - get going!**

After gathering all the materials for that project, get started. Take one small step, then another, and see where it leads you.