



ACEA Today

Official quarterly newsletter of the Association of County Engineers of Alabama
Second Quarter 2010

Addressing Our Needs As County Engineers!

Let me begin by thanking the county engineers and assistants that responded to the County Needs Assessment questionnaire.



Tim Graves
ACEA President
Etowah County Engineer

The time spent in compiling this data is greatly appreciated. Although we did not have 100% participation we did get a response from 64 of the 67 Counties. If you happen to be one of the 3 counties that has failed to respond, I want to encourage you to respond. You still have time to get your County's information included in this important endeavor.

This Needs Assessment is going to be a tremendous tool for all of us when we are discussing with our Commissioners and Legislators our infrastructure funding needs. I have to constantly remind myself when talking to County residents, that while I know exactly what the limitations are in the present funding mechanism that counties operate under, I sometimes do not have a tool to convey that to others.

This Needs Assessment could ultimately be used as a justification for additional funding, whether it is on a statewide level or on a local level.

"Our jobs have been made easier by the sweat and sacrifices of previous county engineers...."

We hope to have this data reviewed and compiled in time for you to use as a talking point when talking with your legislators before the next legislative session.

I would also like to update you on the progress of the TIGER II Grant Application. This competitive grant is very similar to the TIGER Grant that the Association applied for last year with the major difference being that this grant requires a 20% local match. Due to the application deadline of August 23rd a committee made the decision to only include the original projects that were in the original TIGER Grant Application.

The original TIGER Grant included 99 bridge projects located in 35 counties with an estimated cost of \$97 million. The TIGER II Grant is a scaled down version that includes 68 bridge projects located in 24 counties with an estimated cost of \$47 million. It is sad to say but part of the reason for the reduction in the number of projects is because of the requirement of the local match. Times are really hard when we

have to make the decision to not apply for 80% federal funds, because of the lack of matching funds.

I am pleased to say that while there is still more work to be done by the counties included in this application, significant progress has been made on this application by the committee and we are well on our way to having the application completed before the deadline.

So, as my term as your president comes to an end in the next month, I want to urge you to get involved with this Association. The job title of "county engineer" has changed tremendously during my tenure as a county employee with many more duties and responsibilities being placed in our laps. As you can tell from the topics in this article, we have to be assertive and proactive and not just do the minimum that our jobs require.

Our jobs have been made easier by the sweat and sacrifices of previous county engineers and now it is our turn to step up to the plate and take on the challenge that the current economic environment has thrust us into. We are not policy makers, but we do have an obligation to inform the people that do make the policies and give them the knowledge that you possess.

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82nd Annual ACCA Convention, *Making the Right Move*



ACCA's 82nd Annual Convention is slated for August 24-26, at Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, Ala. The deadline for early convention registration is Friday, July 30. Alabama's counties will have to focus on *Making the Right Move* in November with the election of several new statewide officers. This year the Democratic and Republican candidates for the Offices of Governor, Lt. Governor and Attorney General will address our membership.

Another focus will be how counties will tackle growing expenditures. While county revenues remain unchanged - medical expenses, lawsuits, transportation, employee costs are skyrocketing.

Nationally, many innovative and productive ideas have been utilized to improve the financial plight of counties facing the same challenges as those here in Alabama. And the opening general session of ACCA's 82nd Annual Convention will focus on applying these innovative ideas here in Alabama's 67 counties.

"In order to address the massive fiscal drain on county budgets resulting from pre-trial detention, counties must first determine who is in their jail and why," Murray said. The state must then develop programs and alternatives that will reduce county costs while also protecting the citizens.

But Donald Murray, senior legislative director for NACo, who works directly with counties throughout the nation, says counties can take some

steps that do not require legislative changes. He will also be apart of the opening general session to provide concrete examples of programs implemented in other states that have reduced costs to county governments.

"We're excited about this opening session," said ACCA executive director Sonny Brasfield, "because it should provide counties with ideas that can translate into a positive impact back home."

Educational Sessions

The convention will, of course, include breakout sessions for all the Association's affiliate organizations.

The Engineers' breakout session on August 26th will be from 8:45 a.m. - 12 p.m. Specific topics for Engineers' will include:

- ✓ *ALDOT Update* with Ed Phillips
- ✓ *Preserving Our Highway Investment* with Larry Galehouse
- ✓ *Discussion of Boundary Problems w/ Subdivisions* with Gary Sherrer
- ✓ *Home Builders Perspective on Subdivision Regulations* with Jason Reid
- ✓ *Lessons Learned: Private Road Subdivisions* with Richie Beyer

Also the 19th Annual Awards for Excellence in County Government will be presented during the Annual Convention's Awards Ceremony on Thursday, August 26th.

And don't forget the President's Banquet at 6:30 p.m. honoring **2010-2011 President-Elect Ricky Burney** of Clay County followed by the **President's Inaugural Dance** featuring *The Maxx* band.

Log onto www.acca-online.org to register and get more information.

association of county commissions of alabama
82nd ANNUAL Convention

Aug 24-26, 2010 • Perdido Beach Resort • Orange Beach, Ala. • Register online at www.acca-online.org

Monday, August 23

12 p.m. Golf Tournament Lunch

1 p.m. Golf Tournament Shotgun

Tuesday, August 24

9 - 10 a.m. ACEA Board Meeting

10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Affiliate Meetings

ACEA - 10 a.m.; ACAA - 1 p.m.; AAND - 3 p.m.; AAEM Board Meeting - 4 p.m.

11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Registration Desk Open

11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Exhibit Showcase

11 a.m. - Noon ACCA Board of Directors

12 - 1 p.m. Lunch in the Exhibit Hall

1 - 5 p.m. CROAA Breakout Session

- ▶ Pollution Control
- ▶ Steps to Deny License Renewal, Taxpayer Advocacy Program
- ▶ Ethics Overview
- ▶ Overview of the County
- ▶ Government Education Institute
- ▶ CROAA Business Session

2 - 3 p.m.

- ▶ Minority Issue Steering Committee (Open Forum)

2 - 3 p.m.

- ▶ ACCA Workers Compensation & Liability Insurance Fund Meeting

5 - 6:30 p.m.

- ▶ Opening in the Exhibit Hall

Wednesday, August 25

7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Convention Breakfast

7:45 - 8:30 a.m.

Nominating Committee Meeting

Resolutions Committee Meeting

8 - 11:30 a.m. Registration Desk Open

8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

- ▶ Opening General Session
- ▶ Improving Pretrial Justice
- ▶ Reducing Expenses Associated with Pretrial Detainees
- ▶ Gubernatorial Candidates
- ▶ Report of the Nominating Committee

- ▶ Attorney General Candidates
 - ▶ Lieutenant Governor Candidates
- 12 - 1:15 p.m. County Agents Lunch
- 1:30 - 4:45 p.m. Concurrent Sessions
- ▶ The Future of Alabama's Prison System
 - ▶ EPA Storm Water Update
 - ▶ Tour of Auburn University Biomass Gasification and Electrical Power Mobile Laboratory
 - ▶ Electronic Hearings for Prisoners
 - ▶ Problems with Municipal Police Jurisdictions
 - ▶ Increasing County Influence in Legislative Elections
 - ▶ Managing Public Input
- 4:45 p.m. ALGTI Board Meeting

Thursday, August 26

7:45 - 8:45 a.m. County Agents Breakfast

8:45 a.m. - 12 p.m. Breakout Sessions:

Commissioners

- ▶ Why the Collection of 9-1-1 Fees is Important to Your County
- ▶ Commissioners and EMA Directors Working Together
- ▶ Federal Energy Policy Update: Climate Change Legislation

Combined Session with Engineers After the Break

- ▶ Discussion of Boundary Problems with Subdivisions, *Gary Sherrer, Houston County Attorney*
- ▶ Home Builders Perspective on Subdivision Regulations, *Jason Reid, Regulatory Affairs Director, Home Builders Association of Alabama*
- ▶ Lessons Learned: Private Road Subdivisions, *Richie Beyer, Elmore County Engineer*

ACEA

- ▶ ALDOT Update, *Ed Phillips, County Transportation Director*
- ▶ National Center for Pavement Preservation, *Larry Galehouse, Dir.*

Combined Session with Commissioners After the Break

- ▶ Discussion of Boundary Problems with Subdivisions, *Gary Sherrer*
- ▶ Home Builders Perspective on Subdivision Regulations, *Jason Reid*
- ▶ Lessons Learned: Private Road Subdivisions, *Richie Beyer*

ACAA

- ▶ Examiners Report
- ▶ Checklist for Tax Collection: Are You Getting All Your Money?
- ▶ Preparing Your New Commissioners
- ▶ Review of Omnibus and Q&A Session

AAEM, AAND and CROAA Combined Breakout Session

- ▶ Effective Tools for Disarming Difficult People

12 - 1:15 p.m.

- ▶ Convention Luncheon Honoring 2009-2010 President Larry White

1:45 - 4:45 p.m.

Afternoon General Session

- ▶ Awards Ceremony
- ▶ Update on the Alabama Trust Fund
- ▶ Update on the Road and Bridge Constitutional Amendment
- ▶ ACCA Business Session
- ▶ Executive Directors Report
- ▶ District Caucuses

6:30 p.m.

President's Banquet Honoring 2010 - 2011 President-Elect Ricky Burney

8 p.m.

President's Inaugural Dance

News of Interest

AFA and ACCA Working Together!

The ACCA staff recently met with representatives of the Alabama Forestry Association, including executive director Chris Isaacson, to discuss a number of issues related to logging in Alabama. The Alabama Forestry Association expressed its desire to assist Alabama counties in their efforts to improve Alabama's rural road and bridge system. Although no specific legislative initiatives have yet been identified, the general support of the forestry community is a very positive development, according to ACCA Executive Director Sonny Brasfield.

"Perhaps more than any other industry, the economic viability of Alabama's forestry community is tied directly to the condition of the rural transportation system," Brasfield explained. "Support from the forestry and farm communities will certainly enhance our efforts to improve the condition of county-maintained roads."

Also during the meeting the two groups discussed the possibility of establishing a model notification and registration policy for counties to consider when requiring loggers to provide advance notice of their intent to harvest timber in a way that will impact county roads and bridges. Brasfield said the forestry representatives expressed support for a more uniform approach that would be more consistent for loggers who are active in more than one county.

The meeting was the second held between the two staffs and was designed to help continue communication. "In the coming months, we will be discussing with the leadership of the ACEA the possibility of organizing a more formal committee process in order to keep the lines of communication open between counties and this important industry," Brasfield explained. In the meantime, staff members of the two Associations will continue to work on plans to improve the condition of rural roads – a goal that both groups certainly have in common.

Joint Bidding.....What You Need to Know!

The 2010 Joint Bid Project is underway. Committees were formed to make preliminary plans for the Joint Bid project on July 7th and many thanks go out to the engineers who will be volunteering their time to make this project a success. As in years past, the invitations to bid will be mailed out in mid-September to all vendors who have requested notice of bid offerings from any county in the state. The tentative schedule provides for the bid opening to take place at the ACCA office on Oct. 15th. Counties will receive additional information about this year's bid project in the coming weeks. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact ACCA's new Government Relations Specialist **Sim Pettway, Jr.** at spettway@acca-online.org.

Reminder.... New Officers and District Reps. will be elected at the 82nd Annual ACCA Convention. The ACEA membership meeting will be held August 24th at 10 a.m.. The District Reps. will be elected during the caucus sessions held at the conclusion of the business meeting.

CGEI Class a Success!

The 2nd class under the CGEI held at the Legends Conference Center in Prattville had a great turnout. Approximately 30 engineers and county commissioners attended the Legal Primer on County Roads course. Many thanks to county engineers **Richie Beyer, Richard Spraggins, Randy Tindell, Marty Lentz, Henry Hawkins** and **Dennis McCall** for their help.

Mark Your Calendar!

➔ **July 28-29**, CGEI Legislative and Governmental Relations class

➔ **August 23-26**, ACCA 82nd Annual Convention

➔ **August 24th**, ACEA Board Meeting & Membership Meeting

➔ **September 29-30**, CGEI Disaster Preparedness and Response class