

# IOWA ENGINEERING CONFERENCE

MAY 14-15, 2025

MARRIOTT - WEST DES MOINES, IOWA

## FULL SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

**Wednesday, May 14, 2025**

**9:00**

### **WELCOME REMARKS**

**9:05-9:55**

### **The Future of Engineering Leadership: An ACEC/Michigan Study on the Motivations and Expectations of the Next Generation of Firm and Industry Leaders**

The AEC consulting industry faces critical challenges amid technological shifts, workforce diversity, and evolving cultural norms. This presentation will provide insights into the next generation of leadership for ACEC member firms. ACEC Michigan Executive Director Ron Brenke will share with us the study Michigan sponsored to identify the challenges of developing future engineering leaders.

**10:00-11:00**

### **ACEC's Research Institute and Lump Sum Contracts and the State of the Industry**

ACEC's Research Institute and Lump Sum Contracts and the State of the Industry

The institute is the leading source of knowledge and thought leadership for creating a more sustainable, safe, secure and technically advanced built environment. Representatives from the Institute will share with us two studies they have completed. The State of the Industry will provide the results of their study focusing on the economic forecast and business sentiment of the consulting engineering industry.

The Institute also commissioned a study in partnership with Virginia Tech to enhance the awareness of potential opportunities and challenges of lump sum structures for engineering and design services in the transportation sector. The study undertook expert interviews to provide a rich data set on perspectives surrounding lump sum contracting. Researchers conducted interviews with 14 client organizations made up of nine DOTs, three federal agencies, and two public transportation authorities.

Presenters: Joe Bates and Kevin McMahon of the ACEC Research Institute.



**11:20-12:00**

### **The State of Engineering in Iowa**

This your opportunity to learn activities being undertaken in Iowa by ACEC Iowa to improve the business of consulting engineering. Members will learn about:

- ACEC and Iowa Department of Transportation Partnering Council
- ACEC Transportation Sector Update
- ACEC Iowa's initiatives with Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- QBS successes and challenges in Iowa since legislation passed three years ago
- 3D Design and Digital Deliverables for Bridges in Iowa
- Legislation in Iowa impacting the business of engineering
- Land Surveyors and Davis Bacon Wages

**1:00 – 2:00**

### **Engineering Education in Iowa**

Iowa businesses have a vested interest in the product our engineering colleges are turning out. This program presented by Iowa State University and the University of Iowa will review trends in enrollment experienced by our Iowa engineering colleges. They will share recruitment strategies they have seen as successful, ideas for increased engagement with students and starting salary and benefit trends.

Presenters: Kellie Olson, Associate Director of Career Services at ISU and Ryan Puhmann, Direct Admissions and Outreach, University of Iowa.

**2:20-3:20**

### **Ethics in Professional Practice**

Rick Fosse is a Master of Disaster (Relief) and shares what it takes to be ethical in professional practice. A newspaper headline announcing Rick Fosse's retirement referred to Rick as the Master of Disaster because during his 11-year tenure as Iowa City's public works director he had to deal with a tornado, three of the four largest floods the city as ever seen and a massive land fill fire. After 33 years as a practicing engineer, he shifted to teaching and is a professor of practice for the civil and environmental engineering program at the University of Iowa. In that role he teaches a course in.

Wait. You're thinking what it's like listening to a prof, right? Well, on the website Rate your Professor, Rick received an amazing 100% rating to the question, "Would you take this class again."



**3:20-4:00**

### **Construction Manager at Risk – Lessons Learned**

Larry Cormicle will discuss with the audience what he has learned in just under 3 years of advising design professionals, contractors and public owners about the use of Construction Manager at-Risk. He has witnessed those that are performing the delivery system to the intent of the law, and has some lessons for those embarking on the delivery system. He will also share some data about the number of projects he is tracking and can share personal stories about the owners using the delivery system.

Presenter: Larry Cormicle is a licensed professional engineer in the State of Iowa in Construction Engineering. He brings decades of experience in general contracting, construction management, and real estate development. He was hired by the Master Builders of Iowa to serve as a consultant assisting public owners, contractors and design professionals on the use of the alternative delivery method Construction Manager at-Risk.

**4:05-5:00**

### **Managing and Mentoring Today's Workforce**

This training equips leaders with strategies to set clear expectations, build connections with remote and hybrid teams, and navigate workplace changes with confidence. Learn practical tips, best practices, and actionable insights to effectively manage and mentor today's evolving workforce.

Objectives:

1. Foster Connection & Clarity – Strengthen relationships and set clear expectations with remote and in-person employees.
2. Navigate Workplace Change – Lead teams through transitions with adaptability and confidence.
3. Apply Best Practices – Implement proven strategies for mentoring and managing a modern workforce.

Presenter: Back by popular demand is Melinda DeCarlo, president of 6885 Consulting. Melinda has spoken at previous meetings and received great evaluations from our members. This year she will share with us lessons learned in managing today's workforce.



**Thursday, May 15, 2025**

**8:30-12:30**

**Building a Firm-Wide Business Development Culture**

Now, more than ever, the importance of institutionalizing a firm-wide business development is paramount to the long-term success of your A/E/C firm. Relying on a few key rainmakers puts your firm at risk. Further, the inability to tap and develop future business development leaders all too often results in departure of key talent—to other firms and other industries. This workshop addresses the following topics and others:

- Why Build a Top-Down Business Development Culture?
- Identification of Key Business Development Talent
- Cultivation of Business Development Acumen, Skills, and Success Stories
- Strategies for Maximizing Your Return-on-Investment
- Impacts of the Pandemic: Which Changes will Stick?

**Recruiting Best Practices in a Candidates' Market**

For years, A/E/C and environmental consulting firms have struggled with attracting (and retaining) key staff. But all too often, firms shoot themselves in the foot by not being sufficiently intentional, thorough, and persistent in identifying and recruiting staff. Project workload gets in the way...as does a lack of processes and systems that when followed, would yield better results. Join Rich Friedman for a discussion of these topics and others:

- Getting your ducks in a row: The position description, talking points/pitching angles, and interview guide
- Candidate identification: What are the most effective tools?
- Candidate outreach and ongoing communication: Using all of the arrows in your quiver
- The interview process: The importance of preparation and consistent messaging
- Crafting an appealing offer: Getting to “yes” without blowing up your salary structure
- Candidate red flags: Observations from 30+ years of recruiting in the A/E/C Industry

Presenter: Rich Friedman, President of Friedman & Partners, has worked in and consulted for the A/E/C and environmental consulting industries for more than 25 years.

Starting out in the trenches as an environmental consultant and business developer for Stone & Webster Engineering in Boston, Rich expanded his reach as the partner in charge of marketing and business development research, consulting and training for Zweig White. He also managed a variety of other projects involving strategic planning, mergers and acquisitions, and executive search. Since launching Friedman & Partners, he has worked with firms at all levels, from small niche consultants to large ENR 500 organizations. He's also conducted hundreds of seminars and workshops for firms, design and environmental industry professional associations and venues, including AIA, SMPS, ACEC, AGC, NSPE and others.

Rich's academic background includes a B.S. from Cornell University and an M.S. from Penn State University, as well as a Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) from Babson College, where he was a Douglass Scholar in Entrepreneurship.

Rich is known for his superior responsiveness, communication skills and ability to achieve results, even in the face of the most challenging organizational dynamics. He's not afraid to push firms out of their comfort zones, provide the nudges needed to maintain momentum—or debunk long-held myths about how to position, market and grow a firm. Known for his unwavering dedication to his clients' success, Rich's clients value his ability to see the big picture and guide them to the goal, without losing track of the details.