



MCEA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

January 21 - 24, 2025 | Cragun's - Brainerd

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

*All sessions are held in Pine Ballroom (Pine 1-3; formerly Lakeshore 1-3) unless otherwise noted.

11:15 a.m. Board of Directors Meeting

Pine 4

12:00 p.m. State Aid Refresher Training for Engineers

Cedar 1 (formerly Paul Bunyan)

This is an opportunity for new (and seasoned) engineers to hear about Federal Aid project delivery for construction and agreement projects, including NEPA, Program Year Deadlines, STIP, Advanced Construction, DCP Checklist, Construction Plans, Federal Requirements, Bid Opening and Award, Finance- Pay Requests, Project Closeout, Highway Construction Audits, and more).

1:30 p.m. Conference Registration Open

Lobby

2:00 p.m. BREAK

Presiding: Justin Bergerson, Isanti County Engineer

2:30 p.m. Opening Session/Welcome

Mel Odens, MCEA President

2:45 p.m. LRRB Update

3:15 p.m. Rapidan Dam Emergency Response & Media Management

Ryan Thilges, Blue Earth County, MCEA Secretary

Ryan Thilges gives an overview of Blue Earth County's recent dam emergency and the challenges of national media attention.

4:00 p.m. Regional Traffic Safety Workshops – Lite

Richard Storm, HDR, Inc.; Tom Prew, MnDOT; Girma Feyissa, MnDOT

Join us for a sneak peek into our full-day Local Road Traffic Safety Workshop series, running since August! In this one-hour session, we'll spark your interest by covering traffic safety, funding opportunities, and State Aid Technical assistance for HSIP. Discover how you can help tackle the recent rise in fatal and serious injury crashes and make our roads safer for all Minnesotans!

5:00 p.m. Adjourn for the Day

5:30 p.m. New Engineers Reception

Shore Room

7:00 p.m. Dinner and Fun Night

Tamarack Event Centre (formerly Sports Centre)

Wednesday, January 22, 2025

*All sessions are held in Pine Ballroom (Pine 1-3; formerly Lakeshore 1-3) unless otherwise noted.

7:30 a.m. Breakfast
Dining Room

Presiding: **Chad Gramentz, Kanabec County Engineer**

8:30 a.m. FHWA, NACE, ICEA Updates

Susan Wimberly, FHWA; Stephen McCall, NACE President; Kevan Stone, NACE CEO & Executive Director; Andrew McGuire, ICEA President

Updates from the Federal Highway Administration, National Association of County Engineers, and Iowa County Engineers Association on recent activity and future outlook.

9:15 a.m. Competitive Grant Writing

Mitch Brouse, Wisconsin Planning Lead, SRF Consulting Group, Inc.; Mel Odens, Kandiyohi County Engineer & MCEA President; Anthony Sellner, Redwood County Engineer

Presentation on effective strategies for securing grant funding in a competitive environment.

10:15 a.m. BREAK

10:30 a.m. Right of Way Issues

Rinke Noonan Attorneys John Kolb, Igor Lenzner, Adam Ripple, and Hannah Schacherl Jansen

Rinke Noonan ROW experts Adam, Hannah, Igor, and John review case law on ROW, drainage, and other property issues.

12:00 p.m. New Member Recognition

12:15 p.m. Lunch

Dining Room

Presiding: **Phil Schmalz, Meeker County Engineer**

1:15 p.m. Winter Road Management

Jed Falgren, MnDOT

Presentation on brine/salt practices, alternatives, and management strategies for ice and snow.

2:00 p.m. Section 106

Jake Foss, Archaeologist, MnDOT; Tracey Von Bargen, Widseth

Presentation on a recent project in Grant County that navigated the process identified in statute in Section 106.

2:45 p.m. BREAK

3:00 p.m. Pavement Condition Data Using GIS

Stephanie Clark, MnDOT

Presentation on how to effectively utilize data gathered by the pavement data van for local planning purposes.

3:45 p.m. Adjourn for the Day

3:45 p.m. District Meetings

Sign-up sheet for District Meeting rooms in Pine Ballroom

6:00 p.m. Dinner

Poolside

Thursday, January 23, 2025

*All sessions are held in Pine Ballroom (Pine 1-3; formerly Lakeshore 1-3) unless otherwise noted.

7:30 a.m. Breakfast
Dining Room

8:30 a.m. Business Meeting

10:00 a.m. Board of Directors Meeting

10:15 a.m. BREAK

Presiding: **Ryan Thilges, Blue Earth County Engineer**

10:30 a.m. Keynote Address: Impact Leadership
Joe Schmit

In this high-energy, high-impact presentation loaded with humor, Joe Schmit inspires and helps you discover how to ramp up the profound power of your influence. When you become more aware and intentional with the impact you have as a leader, it will improve your bottom line and your ROI (Return on *Impact*). Through research, Joe has discovered that, "we make our biggest impressions when we are not trying to be impressive." Impact Leadership is a blueprint to help you improve work culture, develop a high-performance team, and make you a leader of significance. This impact can also be seen on the bottom line.

If there were a going away party today, who would the most people show up for? The person who has a "Silent Impact" on everyone around them...but what's their secret? Who would you place on your personal Mt. Rushmore of Influence and why would they be there? Explore what "Impact Resolutions" you can make to become a leader of purpose, persistence, and passion.



12:00 p.m. Lunch
Dining Room

Presiding: **Ted Schoenecker, Assistant Division Director, MnDOT State Aid**

1:00 p.m. Ethics
Josh Root, MnDOT

Presentation on ethics in civil engineering and public service leadership.

2:00 p.m. BREAK

2:15 p.m. Use of Highway Rights of Way for Transmission
Jessica Oh, MnDOT

The 2024 legislative session expanded and clarified use of highway rights of way for high voltage transmission. In anticipation of legislative changes for the past four years, MnDOT has been evaluating the technical and regulatory considerations for added transmission infrastructure in ROW with the MN PUC, Commerce and national partners. This session will share the current state of proposed projects, and share new resources and processes within MnDOT's utility accommodation of transmission infrastructure as part of MnDOT's participation in AASHTO's Moonshot Initiative in 2024.

3:00 p.m. State Aid Update
Ted Schoenecker, Assistant Division Director, MnDOT State Aid

What is it that you say you do around here? Come and listen to all that state aid has to offer.

3:45 p.m. Adjourn

VENDOR EVENTS – Thursday p.m.

- 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Vendor Registration**
Lobby
- 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Vendor Set-up for Reception**
Tamarack Event Centre (formerly Sports Centre)
- 4:00 p.m. Reception**
Tamarack Event Centre (formerly Sports Centre)
- 6:00 p.m. Awards Banquet**
Dining Room
- Reception (Ends at 10pm)**
Tamarack Event Centre (formerly Sports Centre)

Friday, January 24, 2025

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast**
Dining Room
- 9:00 a.m. Committee Meetings**
Sign-up sheet for committee meeting rooms in Pine Ballroom
- 10:30 a.m. Adjourn**

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- Mel Odens, President, Kandiyohi County
- Lyndon Robjent, Vice President, Carver County
- Keith Berndt, Treasurer, Norman County
- Ryan Thilges, Secretary, Blue Earth County
- Brian Pogodzinski, Past President, Houston County

2025 CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Chad Gramentz, Kanabec County (co-chair)
- Phil Schmalz, Meeker County (co-chair)
- Justin Bergerson, Isanti County
- Erin Laberee, Dakota County
- Mel Odens, President, Kandiyohi County
- Ryan Thilges, Secretary, Blue Earth County
- Ted Schoenecker, State Aid for Local Transportation

Sponsored by:

- Minnesota County Engineers Association
- Minnesota Department of Transportation

Facilitated by:

- Association of Minnesota Counties