



## Cast Your Vote! Nomination Summaries

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### 2026 NOMINEES BY AWARD CATEGORY

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#### Employer of the Year - 2026 Nominees

1. **Atlas Technical Consultants** is committed to advancing women across its 3,300-professional network. Led by CEO Jacque Hinman alongside a female-heavy executive team, Atlas actively drives female leadership, including doubling its women in Georgia leadership roles to eight. Atlas strongly supports WTS by sponsoring memberships throughout Georgia, funding event attendance, and backing staff-led chapter presentations and volunteer leadership. Career growth is fostered through structured succession planning, formal mentoring, leadership training, ERGs, educational reimbursements, and quarterly "Success Sessions" focused on professional licensure. Additionally, Atlas strengthens the future workforce pipeline through robust university partnerships, such as UGA's Employer of the Day program, and internship opportunities—including hosting engineering interns in its Duluth office—giving young female professionals direct project experience and mentorship to build long-term transportation careers.
2. **AtkinsRéalis** is a world-class engineering and nuclear services firm, leverages technology, data, and a commitment to core values to transform global infrastructure. Operating in the U.S. with nearly 5,000 employees, the company emphasizes an inclusive culture, with women occupying 27% of executive roles, 40% of senior leadership positions, and nearly 39% of project delivery roles. Supported by the AtkinsRéalis Foundation—which awarded \$250,000 in STEM scholarships and grants in 2025—the organization invests in future industry leaders through robust K–12 outreach and university partnerships. AtkinsRéalis actively advances women in transportation through a two-decade partnership with WTS International, offering extensive board leadership, regional sponsorship, flexible work policies, and employee resource groups. By funding professional certifications, leadership programs, and external organization memberships, the firm builds a sustainable leadership pipeline to empower women at every career stage.
3. **Dewberry** embeds gender equity and inclusion into its Strategic Plan, internal tracking, and company culture across 60 offices. Women make up 35% of Dewberry's 2,700+ workforce, holding vital roles as C-suite executives, Board members, and 50% of senior leadership in its Atlanta office. As a Corporate Partner, Dewberry sponsors multiple WTS

chapters, reimburses memberships, and funds employee conference involvement. Employee resource groups—such as Empowering Women at Dewberry support growth—pay equity analyses, leadership development, and tuition and licensure reimbursements. Furthermore, Dewberry fosters the future transportation pipeline through its summer internship program, ACEC Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day sponsorships, and active community STEM outreach.

4. **Gresham Smith** has a strong commitment to employee ownership, transparent communication, and targeted advancement for women in transportation. Across 27 offices, the firm actively elevates female representation, featuring four executive leaders and over 30 women in senior roles. Gresham Smith directly supports WTS by fully funding employee memberships and conference expenses, providing paid work time for WTS involvement, and sponsoring the 2026 International Conference. Internal growth is driven by robust programs like the *Build U* learning platform, LEAP leadership training, licensure reimbursements, and an active Women's ERN. Furthermore, the firm fosters the next generation of industry talent through college internships, high school job shadowing, Girl Scout STEM initiatives, and partnerships like ACEC GA's *Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day*.
5. **HNTB** is committed to advancing women in transportation through diverse leadership, structured career growth, and deep WTS engagement. As the sole Pinnacle Corporate Sponsor of WTS International and WTS Atlanta's 2026 Presenting Sponsor, HNTB covers membership and conference expenses while providing paid time for involvement. Locally, over 30 employees belong to WTS, with Iris Ortiz serving as Atlanta Chapter President and others holding international board seats. Within HNTB, women hold executive roles nationwide—including office leaders and division presidents—and lead major GDOT and MARTA projects. The firm drives internal progression via robust career planning, tuition reimbursement, and mentorship. Furthermore, HNTB builds the talent pipeline by recruiting female interns—hiring ten in Atlanta over the past five years—and partnering with organizations like SWE and WTS to provide clear pathways to full-time engineering and planning careers.
6. **Luster National, Inc.**, a third-generation, minority-owned small business, is deeply committed to advancing women across major national and local infrastructure projects. Led by female executives including President Emily Luster and Director Sarah Luster, women hold critical leadership roles at Luster, supervising key GDOT Major Mobility Investment Program initiatives and leading statewide environmental assessments. Luster actively supports WTS through multi-chapter memberships, event sponsorships, and committee mentorship. Internal career growth is driven by a \$2,500 annual professional development stipend, full coverage of professional licenses, paid parental leave, the EmpowHER committee, and structured career-mapping tools like the Luster Leadership Series. Additionally, Luster invests in the future transportation pipeline by placing paid female undergraduate interns onto high-profile projects, providing essential hands-on experience, mentorship, and clear pathways to long-term industry success.
7. **STV Inc.** actively develops, supports, and retains women in transportation careers. Female professionals at STV are entrusted with early technical responsibility, client interaction, and project decision-making, supported by visible executive leaders like Rhandi Gallegos, VP and Georgia Area Manager. The firm invests directly in its

workforce through tuition assistance, certification reimbursements, interactive mentorship, and an internal Career Hub for continuous skill-building. STV deeply supports WTS Atlanta by supporting event participation, driving chapter membership, and managing local scholarship outreach. Furthermore, STV builds the future industry pipeline by engaging female interns in hands-on, active infrastructure projects, providing clear pathways for long-term growth from entry-level roles into technical and executive leadership.

### **Honorable Ray LaHood (Man of the Year) Award – 2026 Nominees**

1. **Clyde Higgs** has excelled with his transformative leadership as President and CEO of the Atlanta Beltline. Higgs has built an organizational culture where women hold significant decision-making power: 66 of 84 employees are female, women comprise three-quarters of the C-suite, and the Design & Construction team is majority female and led by a female Vice President. Under his direction, the Beltline has completed nearly 17 miles of its 22-mile loop, generated over 60,500 construction jobs, surpassed affordable housing targets, and launched Atlanta's first autonomous public transit pilot, ATL Spoke. Furthermore, Higgs systematically embeds equity into procurement by directing 30% to Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) and dividing contracts into smaller segments, ensuring female- and minority-owned firms can meaningfully participate in creating a more connected, accessible Atlanta.
2. **Dustin O'Quinn** is recognized for his sustained leadership, advocacy, and commitment to advancing women and minorities in transportation. Serving as Deputy Program Manager for GDOT's Office of Innovative Delivery PMC, Dustin has led major infrastructure initiatives—including Design-Build and P3 projects—while embedding diversity into his core leadership philosophy. Over 60% of his team is comprised of women, reflecting his intentional efforts to recruit, retain, and promote diverse talent. Dustin actively mentors emerging professionals, sponsors women for high-profile strategic roles, removes barriers to advancement, and ensures underrepresented voices are featured in key project decisions. Through hands-on mentorship and advocacy, Dustin has built a more inclusive industry pipeline, proving that diverse perspectives drive superior project delivery across Georgia's transportation landscape.
3. **Ricky Smith**, is a national leader in the aviation industry and a champion for women and minorities. He oversees the world's busiest airport with more than 108 million passengers annually, and a multi-billion-dollar modernization program. In his first year, Smith built an Executive Management Team with 45% women representation—surpassing the national average of 30%. He uses high-profile platforms to amplify women leaders and minority voices. Nationally, his advocacy is matched by action. During a time when organizations across the nation took a scared posture in reaction to volatility at the national level, Ricky stood tall and courageous noting that “we are confident that the airport will be able to pursue alternative funding to advance capital projects”. As AMAC National Chair and an ACI-NA Director, he shapes equity policies across the aviation industry. Smith actively mentors young women professionals and is a strong supporter of strategic partnerships with WTS-I and WTS Atlanta.

4. **Todd Long**, South Atlantic Division Lead at Atlas Technical Consultants has spent 36 years shaping Georgia's transportation while actively advancing women and underrepresented groups. Long held top public roles—including Deputy Commissioner of GDOT and COO of Fulton County—where he led GDOT's largest \$5B construction letting program and authored major regional sales tax legislation. At Atlas, he intentionally reshaped corporate culture, doubling female leadership in Georgia from four to eight by actively sponsoring women for promotions, client-facing roles, and industry awards. As an adjunct professor at Georgia Tech since 2018, Long uses his classroom to mentor and place nearly 120 graduate students into transportation careers. Furthermore, he drives inclusivity statewide by increasing DBE participation on major municipal contracts and ensuring minority- and women-owned businesses are meaningfully integrated into critical infrastructure projects.

### **Innovative Transportation Solution Award – 2026 Nominees**

1. **Georgia National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Deployment Program**  
Through exceptional teamwork and technical excellence, GDOT and HNTB successfully secured NEPA approval and federal funding authorization for 23 National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) sites in an unprecedented 30-day timeframe. Driven by a prompt modification to the Build America Buy America (BABA) waiver in February 2026, the team rapidly compressed a standard 3-to-12-month review process—completing extensive field surveys across 14 counties in just nine days. Women held 6 of 8 lead positions and comprised 25 of the 39 team members, orchestrating seamless coordination across GDOT's environmental, finance, and program management units alongside FHWA partners. By achieving NEPA approvals and securing funding obligations by March 13, 2026, the women-led team protected the uninterrupted rollout of Georgia's electric vehicle charging network, enhancing state transportation resilience and ensuring contractors could proceed with design and construction without delay.
2. **I-20/I-285 West Interchange Project**  
The GDOT I-20/I-285 West Interchange Project is a design-build initiative in Fulton and Cobb counties reconstructing a top-ranked national freight bottleneck to improve capacity, safety, and travel times by 2030. Driven by leadership from 16 women across key environmental, project management, communications, and quality roles, a proactive "one team" strategy has accelerated permit reviews and cut documentation timelines by 50% to 75%, keeping construction three months ahead of schedule. Sustained community engagement remains central to the project through monthly meetings, a local workforce development plan, and specialized historic mitigation—such as short films and a community gateway marker—to preserve neighborhood heritage like the Collier Heights Historic District. Currently progressing past major environmental and permitting milestones, the project continues to balance fast-paced infrastructure expansion with ongoing stakeholder feedback and local workforce commitments.
3. **I-95 Widening NEPA Environmental Clearance Female Collective**  
Delivered within an unprecedented six-month timeframe after federal oversight was mandated, the I-95 Widening project achieved NEPA environmental clearance for a

critical 22-mile coastal freight and evacuation corridor through the leadership of 15 key female discipline leads. Facing a compressed schedule, female leaders across ecology, public outreach, cultural resources, and engineering implemented innovative delivery strategies. These included GDOT's first QR code-based online noise barrier voting, an expedited Section 106 combined cultural resource review process, proactive interagency coordination to avoid formal Section 7 consultation, and targeted digital outreach that reached hundreds of thousands of stakeholders while generating nearly 80% project support. Their collaborative approach secured multiple first-submittal approvals from FHWA, USFWS, SHPO, and GDOT—avoiding an Individual Permit and eliminating stream impacts. By balancing rapid project delivery with environmental stewardship, these female leaders established transformative new best practices for major transportation investments.

**4. South Barrett Reliever Phase 3 (SBR3)**

The South Barrett Reliever Phase 3 (SBR3) project, led by the Cobb County Department of Transportation (CCDOT) stands out as a transformative, multimodal infrastructure investment defined by extraordinary female leadership from vision to delivery. SBR3 completes a crucial parallel east-west corridor to relieve Barrett Parkway—a heavily congested commercial artery carrying over 60,000 vehicles daily—and is projected to reduce traffic volumes by 22%. The technically complex project features a new bridge over I-75 and the Northwest Corridor Express Lanes, multilane roundabouts, and extensive bike, pedestrian, and trail connections. Beyond its engineering success, SBR3 was powered by 51 female professionals across public agencies and private firms—including Cobb DOT Project Manager Karyn Matthews, Tracy Styf, and Kathy Zahul—who led planning, funding, engineering, right-of-way, and construction. By combining interdisciplinary female leadership with context-sensitive design, SBR3 delivers a safer, more connected, and highly accessible transportation asset for Cobb County and the Town Center district.

**5. Tamae Partain for RAIB (The Ray, Arcadis, Infrastrategies, Beverly Scott Associates).**

This nominee deserves recognition for leading an innovative, community-driven transportation initiative through the USDOT Thriving Communities Program that transformed a \$5 million investment into over \$194 million in funding—a 38x return on investment. Directed by an all-female core leadership team, the effort converted lived community experience into actionable, fundable infrastructure strategies across 15 Networked Communities nationwide. The team developed scalable delivery tools, including Grant and Public Involvement Playbooks, a Workforce Opportunity Guide, a GDOT-compliant Project Management App, and a 2 CFR 200 Grant Administration App to build lasting local capacity. Notably, she also partnered with the FAA to deploy one of the first Starlink systems in St. Paul, Alaska, restoring critical communications for a remote island community. By seamlessly combining equity, multimodal planning, and execution excellence, her leadership created a scalable, future-ready roadmap for transformational mobility.

1. **Bianca George**, a Project Manager at Corporate Environmental Risk Management (CERM) with over a decade of infrastructure experience, is nominated for the 2026 WTS Atlanta Chapter Member of the Year for her exemplary leadership and service. Serving as Board Secretary and Co-Chair of the Communications & Publicity Committee since 2023, Bianca plays a crucial role in chapter governance and visibility. She manages board documentation and quarterly reporting to WTS International while strategically promoting roughly 15 annual chapter events across digital platforms to boost member participation and sponsor value. Prior to her board tenure, she served on the 40th Anniversary Committee and helped launch the inaugural Past Presidents Breakfast in 2022. Additionally, Bianca serves on the CERM Legacy Foundation Board, actively promoting STEM careers for underrepresented youth, mentoring peers, and tirelessly advancing women across the transportation sector.
2. **Christina Roberts**, PMP, a Portfolio Manager II at MARTA, is nominated for the 2026 WTS Atlanta Chapter Member of the Year for her exceptional commitment as a volunteer and leader for multiple chapter committees. Since joining WTS in 2022, she has brought transformative leadership, continuous improvement, and deep dedication to the chapter. As leader of the Hospitality subcommittee for the 2025 Scholarships and Awards Luncheon, she designed a dedicated Customer Service Desk that eliminated registration bottlenecks and improved attendee experience. Serving as Community Service and Outreach (CS&O) Chair since September 2025, Christina expanded the committee's output from two annual events to hosting nine service projects with organizations like Trees Atlanta, Southern Crescent Habitat for Humanity, and the Atlanta Community Food Bank. By empowering a team of 20 volunteers to take ownership of initiatives, Christina has boosted member engagement, cultivated emerging leaders, and elevated WTS Atlanta's reputation across the transportation industry and local community.
3. **Martika Johanson-Murray** is nominated for the 2026 WTS Atlanta Chapter Member of the Year for her exceptional dedication to educating and inspiring high school girls toward transportation careers. Serving as TYOU Chair for two years and an active Community and Outreach Committee member, Martika maintains a vital local high school partnership that connects students with professional WTS mentors. Her inspiring journey from a 2013 TYOU student at Grady High School to an engineering career at Kapsch, she was featured on an IBTTA panel, highlighting the program's real-world impact. Martika represented the WTS Atlanta chapter and Kapsch at the 2025 Toronto and 2026 Los Angeles WTS Annual Conferences. Through her professional reach, passion, and leadership, Martika drives chapter membership, secures corporate support, and tirelessly advances women across the transportation industry.

### **Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award – 2026 Nominees**

1. **Arcadis** fosters an inclusive workplace culture through its global *Inclusion by Design* philosophy, embedding diversity, collaboration, and belonging into its leadership and client work. Reflecting this commitment, Heather Polinsky was named the company's first female global CEO in its 138-year history in 2026. Arcadis supports a network of CEO-sponsored Affinity Groups, including the Black Employee Network (BEN), which drives cultural awareness, professional development, and community outreach. Within

the transportation sector, Arcadis advances career growth through WTS International sponsorships, board service, and STEM initiatives. BEN complements these efforts by building partnerships with major universities (such as Howard, Cornell, and NC A&T) and diversity organizations like NSBE. Through its annual Mentor-Mentee Program and Young Professional Development Workshops, Arcadis expands access to career pathways, cultivates emerging leadership, and strengthens the broader transportation industry pipeline.

2. **Kenyata D. Smiley** has made exceptional, measurable contributions to advancing diversity, inclusion, and equity across the transportation industry. As President of the COMTO Atlanta Chapter, she has expanded membership development and helped raise over \$70,000 in sponsorships and scholarships since 2024 to directly support underrepresented students and professionals. Kenyata spearheaded the chartering of COMTO's first national collegiate chapter at Clark Atlanta University and established an Emerging Leaders Committee, creating a vital talent pipeline for minority students. She continues to elevate female leaders through the signature "Women Who Move Atlanta" initiative, increasing visibility for women across all transit modes. Beyond her professional impact, Kenyata serves her community through Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and volunteers with shelters for battered women and human trafficking rescue organizations, exemplifying a lifelong commitment to service, equity, and empowering marginalized voices in transportation.
3. **RS&H** fosters an inclusive culture of belonging through associate-led Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) that empower a workforce where women represent over 33% of associates. Its ERG network—including Ignite (Women's), BUILT (Black Professionals), Prism (LGBTQ+), and HONOR (Military)—drives multicultural awareness, professional development, and community impact, such as raising thousands for youth suicide prevention and breast cancer research and establishing MLK Jr. Day as a paid holiday. RS&H actively connects ERG initiatives with its Elevate Talent and Scholars Programs, partnering with HBCUs, women-only colleges, and industry organizations like WTS, COMTO, and NSBE to expand STEM career pathways. The firm complements these pipeline efforts with strong internal representation, featuring female executive leadership in key C-suite roles, including CEO, CFO, and Chief People Officer. Through integrated recruitment, mentorship, and advocacy, RS&H delivers a sustained, measurable commitment to advancing women and underrepresented populations in transportation.

### **Woman of the Year Award – 2026 Nominees**

1. **Linda Edwards** is a trailblazing founder with over 40 years of engineering and environmental experience. Co-founding Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. (EPEI) in 1994, she expanded the firm from a four-person team into a 125-employee multidisciplinary business across the Southeast. Her work with GDOT and creation of active GPTQ subcommittees transformed public-private collaboration, strengthening complex highway, airport, and transit projects. A founding member of WTS Atlanta, Edwards advocates for inclusive workplace culture, where women represent over half of EPEI's total workforce and leadership. Her commitment to mentorship and career

development is matched by widespread acclaim, including eight consecutive years on the 100 Most Influential Women in Georgia Engineering list (2018–2026), the Female Business Enterprise Phoenix Trailblazer Award, and WTS Employer of the Year honors. Edwards' career exemplifies sustained excellence, leadership, and the advancement of women and minorities in the transportation industry.

2. **Dr. Malika Reed Wilkins** is a transformative leader whose 25-year career has reshaped mobility, public policy, and regional collaboration across North America. As CEO and Executive Director of WTS International, she leads over 10,000 members across 73 chapters and oversees \$900,000 in annual scholarships for emerging talent. Her executive legacy includes landmark Georgia infrastructure achievements, such as launching the Peach Pass express lanes, developing award-winning commuter incentive programs at SRTA, and leading regional demand management for 20 counties at the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC). Beyond technical operations, Dr. Wilkins has dedicated her career to breaking barriers for underrepresented groups through WTS and COMTO Atlanta. Recognized with over 78 professional accolades—including eight consecutive years as one of Georgia's 100 Most Influential Women in Engineering—her visionary leadership and commitment to equitable growth make her a definitive choice for the Woman of the Year Award.
3. **Tracy Styf**. Over nearly three decades as Executive Director of the Town Center CID, Tracy Styf has transformed regional mobility and economic vitality by securing over \$130 million in external funding. Known for her collaborative leadership, she has spearheaded major infrastructure projects, including the \$62 million+ South Barrett Reliever, the Noonday Creek Trail expansion, and Georgia's first CID-operated bikeshare program. Beyond physical infrastructure, Styf founded the Town Center Community Alliance to enhance local greenspace and public art, while serving in key civic leadership roles across Cobb County and Atlanta. A dedicated mentor, she leads an all-female staff and actively creates pathways for women- and minority-owned firms, local students, and emerging professionals in transportation. Her extensive industry achievements and advocacy for inclusive growth make her a highly deserving candidate for the 2026 WTS Woman of the Year Award.