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Adele Hall
President, WTS Minnesota

Dear WTS members and friends:

Every spring I am heartened and inspired by the WTS-Minnesota Scholarships and Recognitions event and this year was no different. It was a treat to see so many of you at Windows on Minnesota to celebrate our scholarship and award winners. A theme I heard among several of the terrific speeches was the importance of working in teams to realize our individual and collective ambitions. Ray LaHood award winner, Adrian Potter, shared his mantra of “lift as we climb” and this one resonated strongly with me for WTS itself.

As the organization collectively has climbed—growing the membership, the board, the budget, the range of programs, learning opportunities, and events over its 40-year history—it has lifted all of us. By scholarships or awards, connections, job opportunities, friendship, career move inspirations, growth in thought and practice, providing a forum for exploration of our most difficult subjects, empowerment, and celebrating our milestones and accomplishments, WTS has lifted all of us as individuals and as a collective industry as it has climbed.

Perhaps it’s a bit rich for the president of an organization to be so proud of it, but if I’m honest, that’s why I’m here. Rather than having much to do with me or any one individual, this comes back to the magic of teams we heard described so aptly by our award winners. Thanks to all of you for being part of team WTS.

Adele
SCHOLARSHIPS AND RECOGNITIONS RECAP

On April 20, more than 150 WTS members and friends gathered at Windows on Minnesota to celebrate the 2023 Scholarship and Recognition Award recipients. Through our scholarship program, WTS is proud to support the burgeoning careers of young women entering the field of transportation as well as career growth for established professionals. With our annual recognition awards, we are also thrilled to celebrate individuals who exemplify WTS’s core values of collaboration and inclusivity, dedicating themselves to creating access and equity for women and other underrepresented groups in our field. Congratulations again to this year’s winners:

**Past President Award** - Lyssa Leitner (Washington County)
**Member of the Year Award** - Jennifer Wiltgen (MnDOT) and Michelle LaGarde (Braun Intertec)
**Woman of the Year Award** - Nancy Daubenberger (MnDOT)
**Woman to Watch Award** - Laura Kearns (Washington County)
**Employer of the Year Award** - Minnesota Department of Transportation
**Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award** - Abdullahi Abdulle (MnDOT)
**Innovative Transportation Solutions Award** - Metro Transit micro, Meredith Klekotka, Victoria Dan, and Sheila Holbrook-White (Metro Transit)
**Honorable Ray LaHood Award** - Adrian Potter (SRF)

**WTS-MN Graduate Scholarship** - Maya Sheikh (University of Minnesota, Twin Cities – Humphrey School of Public Affairs)
**Donna Allan Undergraduate Scholarship** - Raissa Natcha Ineza (Minnesota State University, Mankato)
**Katherine Turnbull Leadership Undergraduate Scholarship** - Julie Olson (University of Minnesota, Duluth)
**Dan Meyers High School Scholarship** - Greta Gersema (Watertown-Mayer High School)
**WTS-MN President’s Scholarship** - Michelle Julius (Mitchell Hamline School of Law)

Bios are available for recognition award winners and scholarship recipients.

PROGRAMS UPDATE

**March Program – MnDOT Regional Transportation System Management Center Tour**

Our March Program of MnDOT’s Regional Transportation System Management Center (RTMC) was organized by Karen Scheffing (Co-Programs Director), Dany Maloney (Programs Co-Chair), and Jackie Nowak (Programs Committee Member). Attendees joined WTS-MN for a tour of the RTMC, which was led by Tiffany Dagon, MnDOT’s RTMC Director. We learned about Tiffany’s diverse and interesting career and all about how the RTMC operates and responds to incidents. Following the tour, attendees were welcome to join for a happy hour event at the nearby High Pines Brewery.
It has been a busy few months since our Black History Month event “The Women Who Are Making History Today.” The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee has been working on updating and refining goals for the workplan. As a part of this effort we are identifying programs, events, and resources that support these goals. The Land Acknowledgement Action Plan subcommittee has also been meeting to advance work on the action plan. If you are interested in any of these items, you are welcome to join us. Please reach out to Jennifer Wiltgen or Emma Lucken to get on the distribution list or receive the invite to our next meeting. Below are details for our regularly scheduled meetings.

**DEI Committee Meetings**: Last Wednesday of the month at 8:30am  
**Land Acknowledgement Action Plan Meetings**: Last Friday of the month at 8:30am

The Month of May is **Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month**, and there are so many events around the region you can attend to honor and celebrate. See the resources below for more information about the month and events and exhibits near you.

[Asian Pacific American Heritage Month 2023](https://asianpacificheritage.gov)

[Why Asian Pacific American Heritage is celebrated in May](https://www.npr.org): NPR

List of Activities:  
Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in Minneapolis | Meet Minneapolis

Juneteenth celebrations are also just around the corner. If you want to learn more about Juneteenth and its significance, there is an excellent three part series authored by the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The series includes responses by three prominent curators at the museum Mary Elliot, Angela Tate, and Kelly E. Navies.

1st Article:  
[What is Juneteenth?](https://www.nationalmuseumofafricanamericanhistoryandculture.si.edu)  
2nd Article:  
[Who Celebrates Juneteenth?](https://www.nationalmuseumofafricanamericanhistoryandculture.si.edu)  
3rd Article:  
[Why is Juneteenth Important?](https://www.nationalmuseumofafricanamericanhistoryandculture.si.edu)

Also, the article below discusses the important work that archivist Kayla Jackson is doing to preserve Black and African American Minnesotan’s history, specifically the Rondo neighborhood, at the Hallie Q. Brown Center. Kayla provided a brief history of the center at the February Event.

[This young archivist preserves the stories of historic Rondo](https://startribune.com)
Call for Volunteers!

We are growing as a chapter and have so many ways to get involved including, but not limited to: special program assistance, education outreach (school visits and tabling), mentorships, scholarship applications review, fundraising assistance.

As look ahead to a long, sunny Summer, our Special Events team is already planning for the 2023 holiday party. This popular annual event could not take place without the help of volunteers. **Right now we are looking for a few volunteers who can help with silent auction donation requests.**

If you are interested in one of these roles or learning about other ways to get involved in other volunteer opportunities please contact our volunteer coordinator **Angie Bolstad.**

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**MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Michelle Kahl**

WTS MN is relaunching a Member Spotlight as a newsletter feature to share your stories on what being a WTS member means to you. This month’s story features Michelle Kahl, PE, President at Kismet Engineering and WTS MN Mentoring Program Co-Chair. Read what Michelle had to say about her membership below!

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*MEMBERS AND FRIENDS ON THE MOVE*

**Lisa Elliott** is moving to a new role- Transportation Program Supervisor in MnDOT’s Office of Environmental Stewardship, starting June 1.

**Ruby Daniels** has taken a new position at Metro Transit as a senior project coordinator for electric bus infrastructure.

**Joanne Cho** has started a new position as a transportation planner at Stantec.
Join the WTS-MN 2024 Board!

The Board has a variety of positions that are elected and appointed. Below are descriptions of the positions we are currently recruiting for. In late summer, there will be additional positions open. If you’re interested in finding out more about any position, feel free to reach out to any current board members. You must be a member to fill these positions. If you’re not a member now, there is time to become a member!

Nomination and Selection Process

If you’re interested in applying, please follow these steps:

1. Fill out the nomination form by May 31, 2023.
2. Email the forms to Lisa Elliott.
3. A Nomination Committee will review all submissions and make recommendations. The nomination committee is made up of the Past-President, Vice-President, Advisory Board members, and members at-large.

The Board has a variety of positions that are elected and appointed. WTS MN is currently recruiting for three positions on the 2024 Board:

**Treasurer:**
The role of Treasurer involves budget planning, financial reporting, record keeping, and managing incoming and outgoing funds. Additional tasks include -- completing WTS Minnesota taxes, checking the WTS Minnesota P.O. box monthly, as well as any other financial or budget requests WTS International may have. This is a medium-commitment level role with a consistent level of activity, year-round (no busy versus slow season). Computer skills like Microsoft Excel are necessary. The Treasurer must be able to work with Huntington Bank when necessary, to complete occasional in-person bank transactions. The Treasurer will be the holder of the WTS bank card, to be used whenever card purchases are needed by other members.

**TYou Director and Chair:** (two positions)
Transportation You (TYou) is a program that connects the WTS Chapter with high schoolers who are interested in Transportation and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). The program can be offered in a few different ways. Currently, the program operates out of Blaine High School. For 2022-2023 we have structured the program as a series of field trips throughout the year to let the students experience transportation workplaces and careers, with structured tours, panel speakers and one-on-one discussions.

There is a lot of potential for growth and flexibility within the TYou program for the coming year(s). These positions would be a great fit for people who have a passion for mentoring the next generation of transportation professionals. The position requires planning, motivation, and creativity.
Upcoming Events

**5.22**

**What:** Trail Walk with Minneapolis Park Board  
**Where:** Kenwood Park 2101 W Franklin Ave Minneapolis, MN 55405  
**When:** 4:00pm-5:30pm

**6.TBD**

**What:** ADA Field Walk  
**Where:** TBD  
**When:** TBD

**7.TBD**

**What:** Joint WTS-MN/MSES Networking Event  
**Where:** TBD  
**When:** TBD

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board’s (MPRB) Cedar Lake-Lake of the Isles Master Plan process has been ongoing since 2019 and is finally nearing its completion. Join WTS and MPRB on a walking tour of Lake of the Isles to hear more about the Master Plan! The tour will be ~1 mile at a leisurely pace.

Register here!

Stay Tuned for Details!
THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 SPONSORS!

We appreciate your support. You make all our programs, scholarships, and outreach possible!

ADVOCATE LEVEL PARTNERS

AECOM  HNTB  Stantec  HDR  Kimley-Horn

ALLIANT  KLJ  BRAUN INTERTEC  SEH  SRF  WSP  wsb

SUPPORTER LEVEL PARTNERS

AMERICAN ENGINEERING TESTING, INC.  BOLTON & MENK  HRGreen  Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL  TKDA

SMALL BUSINESS/DBE

AZ SERVICES  RANI engineering  PIERCE PINI & ASSOCIATES, INC. Consulting Civil Engineers  HZUNITED

Stonebrooke  ZAN Associates  THE TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE  Sambatek  Isthmus Engineering

PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERS

Metro Transit  Department of Transportation  SAINT PAUL MINNESOTA  Washington County