



# Advancing women Advancing transportation

## Winter 2022 Newsletter

### PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Dear WTS Members and Friends,



Somehow 2022 is already coming to an end. It has been a phenomenal year for our chapter with many accomplishments, great programs, new members, and many new connections. One of the highlights has been celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. A goal for the WTS-MN Chapter Board was to get 40 new members during our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year. We thought this would be a stretch goal, but we accomplished it with over a month to spare! Achieving this goal was due to the hard work of our Board and the commitment of the MN transportation community to WTS.

None of the 2022 accomplishments would have been possible without the amazing leaders on the 2022 Board. These folks work tirelessly to advance the mission of WTS and their passion for the industry and for supporting each other is inspiring. Elections for 2023 are complete but there is always time to get involved in WTS in many capacities – organize a program, be a mentor or mentee, join a committee, or apply to be on the board. Reach out to me or anyone on the Board to learn more!

It has been an absolute honor to serve as the 2022 President. I have been involved in WTS since I was an undergraduate architecture student at the University of Minnesota who thought transportation seemed like an interesting professional area. I can say without a doubt, the experiences I've had with WTS are invaluable and have made me into the professional I am today.

Lyssa Leitner  
President WTS MN Chapter

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## PROGRAMS UPDATE

### JANUARY PROGRAM — NAVIGATING YOUR TRANSPORTATION CAREER PANEL DISCUSSION

Please join us virtually on Monday, January 23rd from 11:30 AM to 1 PM as we kick-off our 2023 programming with an engaging panel discussion surrounding equity, career paths, and achieving professional goals. Our five panelists are industry leaders who represent the public, private, and non-profit sectors. They will share their perspectives, advice, and professional journeys to help us reflect on ways to build stronger, more equitable, and inclusive professional communities, navigate career challenges, and achieve our personal career goals.

This virtual event will be moderated by WTS-MN 2023 Programs Co-Directors, Karen Scheffing (MnDOT) and Erin Jordan (SEH) with panelists Abdullahi Abdulle, Anjali Bains, Becca Hughes, Katie Toghradjian, and HunWen Westman. [Register Here!](#)



**Abdullahi Abdulle**

Transportation  
Equity Planning  
Coordinator, MnDOT



**Anjali Bains**

Lead Director of  
Energy Access and  
Equity, Fresh Energy



**Becca Hughes**

Senior Transporta-  
tion Planner & Senior  
Associate, Stantec



**Katie Toghradjian**

President and  
Founder, Isthmus  
Engineering



**HunWen Westman**

Traffic Engineer,  
City of St. Paul

### FEBRUARY PROGRAM — JOINT ACEC EMERGING PROFESSIONALS / WTS “POLITICS IN ENGINEERING” EVENING EVENT—DETAILS COMING SOON!

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## HOLIDAY PARTY RECAP

The 2022 WTS Holiday Party was held on December 8<sup>th</sup> at 413 Wacouta Event Center, and was an enjoyable evening with guests enjoying hors d'oeuvres, the 50/50 raffle, and bidding on silent auction items. With over 150 registrants this year, the annual party has returned to its pre-pandemic size! The party's silent auction and 50/50 raffle raised over \$5,500 for the WTS Foundation, which will fund scholarships and our TYOU program.





## CHAPTER UPDATES

### TYOU

TYOU had a great visit to the Mall of America with 12 students on Nov 21. They toured the mall itself, the underground tunnels, and backstage of some of the rides.

The next TYOU event is a tour of the Regional Transportation Management Center and the North Loop Bus Garage set up for January 19<sup>th</sup>. Reach out to Laura Melcher ([lmelcher@wsbeng.com](mailto:lmelcher@wsbeng.com)) or Melissa Duhn ([MDuhn@braunintertec.com](mailto:MDuhn@braunintertec.com)) if you are interested in getting involved!



### **2023 RECOGNITION AWARD APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN!**

Each year, WTS Minnesota honors the achievements of members of the Minnesota transportation community through our recognition awards. The nomination period for 2023 WTS Awards is open! Nominating your coworker, project, or employer for a WTS award is easy and a great way to recognize the achievements of a respected colleague or team.

- Member of the Year
- Woman of the Year
- Woman to Watch
- Employer of the Year
- Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award
- Innovation Transportation Solutions Award
- Honorable Ray LaHood Award

Awards are due to **via this Google Form** by **5 pm on January 13, 2023**. Contact Emily Jorgensen at **[Emily.Jorgensen@co.washington.mn.us](mailto:Emily.Jorgensen@co.washington.mn.us)** for more information.

## DEI COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Reflecting on the past year, there has been so much great work and events for the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and we've accomplished a lot. Please join us in the next year and let's see what else we can accomplish together!

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### What we accomplished in 2022:

- Started a monthly DEI working group to provide support in applying lessons from the DEI trainings in members' respective workplaces. Anyone is welcome to join! Please contact Emma Lucken ([emma.lucken@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:emma.lucken@co.ramsey.mn.us)) if interested!
- Developed and disseminated a survey to sponsor organizations gauging current best practices in D&I and DEI. Developed and posted ([linked here](#)) a best practices document for organizations to refer to and use.



- Presented on the trainings and best practices at the Minnesota Transportation Conference in May 2022
- Worked with interested members to begin a Land Acknowledgement Action Plan. This has included several steps:
  - ◇ At the end of 2021 the WTS MN DEI Committee committed to developing concrete actions that WTS MN can take to:
    - ◆ Acknowledge the full history of the land in Minnesota, and our place within that history and its continued implications on the natural and social landscape, of which our transportation system is a part.
    - ◆ Learn more about transportation issues that impact Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities in Minnesota.
    - ◆ Celebrate and acknowledge the contributions of the members of the Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities to transportation in Minnesota and globally.
  - ◇ March 2022 event: Breakfast and open discussion with WTS members about ways to implement the goals above.
  - ◇ December 2022 Discussion & Roundtable: Reviewed resources for celebrating, working with, and supporting tribal governments and communities; have round table discussions related to what actions we can take as an organization and individuals.

Currently, we are engaged in updating our work plan and seeking ways our committee can support, enhance, and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion for WTS Minnesota members and the transportation industry.

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### Some upcoming work includes:

- Continuing our work on the Land Acknowledgement Action Plan.
- Scheduling events and speakers to celebrate, encourage actions and enhance the chapter's knowledge and intentionality in acting, consistent with our values and vision for diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Identifying more training and professional development needs for members with a focus on Diversity and Inclusion in the delivery, development, design and scoping of transportation facilities, operations and planning.

Please join us in 2023! We meet the last Wednesday of every month from 8:30am-9:30am. If you're interested- reach out to Jennifer Wiltgen ([Jennifer.wiltgen@state.mn.us](mailto:Jennifer.wiltgen@state.mn.us)) or Emma Lucken ([emma.lucken@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:emma.lucken@co.ramsey.mn.us)) to get on the invites/ email list!

## CORPORATE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:



### **MN OFFICES:**

MINNEAPOLIS, DULUTH, BAXTER, ST. CLOUD,  
ST. PAUL, BURNSVILLE, AND ROCHESTER

### **TRANSPORTATION SERVICES OFFERED:**

Buildings & Structures, Intelligent Transportation Services (ITS), Traffic Engineering, Transportation Planning, Roadway Design, Right-of-Way, and Transit Planning

### **WHY WSB SUPPORTS WTS MN:**

WSB was founded on the understanding that culture drives results. As a firm, we are committed to building a more diverse workforce. The communities we serve are far more diverse than our industry and we want to be part of the solution. Whether it's through our Opportunity+ training program or Women's Networking Group, we believe in fostering an environment where all staff feel included and valued. We support organizations like WTS because of their commitment to advancing women in the transportation industry.



### **MN OFFICES:**

MINNEAPOLIS AND DULUTH

### **TRANSPORTATION SERVICES OFFERED:**

Transportation and Transit Planning, Environmental Services, Complex Bridge Structures, Tunnel Design, Highway and Road Design, Geospatial Information Systems, Tolling, Mobility Operations, Geotechnical Engineering, Construction Management/Program Management, Alternative Delivery, Aviation Design, Railway

### **WHY WSP SUPPORTS WTS MN:**

WSP USA is the U.S. operating company of WSP, one of the world's leading engineering and professional services firms. Dedicated to serving local communities, we are engineers, planners, technical experts, strategic advisors and construction management professionals. With more than 12,000 employees in 200 offices across the U.S., we partner with our clients to help communities prosper. We value our people and care about their progress and offer the most fulfilling career development for our professionals. To help realize this goal, WSP leverages its partnership with the WTS as a go-to association for the transportation industry on shaping a future workforce that is inclusive of women at all levels.



*CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS: We are growing as a chapter and have so many ways to get involved. See what opportunities are available [here](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PHYKBD) (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PHYKBD>)!*

### MEMBERS AND FRIENDS ON THE MOVE

Celebrating milestones for our members and friends. Have member news to share? Send in snippets about job changes, life milestones, and other accomplishments to [Emily Bowen](#) so we can recognize our colleagues!

**Carrie Desmond-** Is the new Manager of Electric Bus Infrastructure at Metro Transit.

### THANK YOU TO OUR 2022 SPONSORS:

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

#### ADVOCATE



#### SUPPORTER LEVEL:

AET	Michael Baker International
Bolton & Menk	
HR Green	Terracon
	TKDA

#### SMALL BUSINESS/DBE :

LV Engineering	Rani Engineering
Minnesota Transportation Alliance	Sambatek
Professional Engineering Services	Stonebrook
Pierce Pini & Associates	Zan Associates

#### PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERS :

Metro Transit
Minnesota Department of Transportation
Washington County