



# Advancing women Advancing transportation

## April/May 2022 Newsletter



### PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Dear WTS Members and Friends,

The WTS International Annual Conference was held in-person in Seattle this week. There are about 20 people there representing the Minnesota Chapter! This may be the largest group that has attended the conference from Minnesota, and it was an amazing opportunity to learn and connect with WTS folks from around the country. Multiple people were able to attend because they received grants from our chapter. These grants are made possible because of our corporate and public sector sponsors (the list of the sponsors can be seen on page 7 of the newsletter). A HUGE thank you to the sponsors for their continued support of WTS Minnesota's mission.

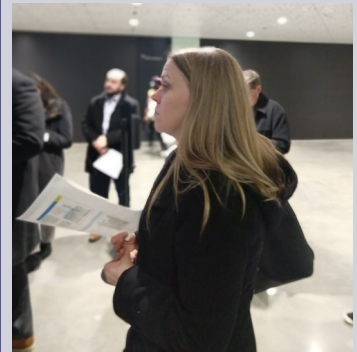
May also marks the return of an in-person Scholarship and Recognitions event. Due to COVID concerns, we are shifting the event from a sit-down lunch to a dessert reception with outdoor/open air options. Our WTS network always provides great feedback about this event, so the Board felt strongly to return to an in-person format for this celebration. [Registration is still open for the May 25 event.](#)

Finally, everyone should put a hold on their calendars for July 28! This year is our Chapter's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year and we are hosting an event to network, connect with current and past WTS members/friends and celebrate our history together. The 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary committee is gathering photos and past membership lists to ensure the event captures all 40 years of our history! Keep an eye out for an invitation in early June.

Lyssa Leitner  
President WTS MN Chapter

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## WTS Membership Update

### Help Us Reach Our 2022 Membership Goals!

In recognition of the Minnesota Chapter's 40th anniversary we are holding a membership drive. Our goal for 2022 is to grow with 40 new members in honor of our 40th year in action. All new members who join from now through July will receive free entry to a program of their choice through November 2022.

Thriving and growing membership in our organization is essential to our mission to develop skills and knowledge within women and for WTS Minnesota to be advocates in individual workplaces to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in the transportation industry.

Encourage a colleague to join WTS Minnesota today! Student membership is always free. Go to <https://www.wtsinternational.org/> to become a member or contact [WTSMinnesotaMembership@gmail.com](mailto:WTSMinnesotaMembership@gmail.com) for assistance.

### Meet our 2021-2022 WTS Minnesota Honorary Members

Each year WTS Minnesota selects up to two honorary members to join our chapter and help us advance the organization's mission. We are pleased to introduce our 2021-2022 Honorary Members.



Dr. Nerita is the Dean for the School of Business, Careers, Education & Workforce Innovation at North Hennepin Community College and the President/Chief Executive Officer of JG Consulting, LLC. She has a variety of expertise which ranges from Public and Private sector to Higher Education displaying exceptional leadership, organizational development, time management skills, enhanced knowledge of implementing and identifying training needs, and succession planning. She has acquired knowledge in the areas of training & staff development, leadership development, racial equity and other multi-faceted activities in the business and governmental realm.

*Dr. Nerita Hughes – Dean School of Business,  
Careers, Education & Workforce Innovation  
at North Hennepin Community College*

## WTS Membership Update (Cont.)

### Meet our 2021-2022 WTS Minnesota Honorary Members



*Margaret Lewis - Senior VP Manufacturing  
and Facilities at New Flyer*

Margaret Lewis is a seasoned manufacturing professional with over thirty years of progressive plant management and operational, quality, and manufacturing leadership experience around the globe. Margaret joined New Flyer in 2009 as Senior Vice President, Quality and Continuous Improvement, and assumed the Senior Vice President, Manufacturing & Facilities role in 2018. Margaret is responsible for all New Flyer transit bus and motor coach manufacturing and facilities operations across the U.S. and Canada, working closely with engineering, quality, safety, and supply chain functions.



*Julie Whitcher - Minnesota State Rail Safety  
Engineer at MnDOT*

Julie has two decades of experience at the Minnesota Department of Transportation where she is currently the State Rail Safety Engineer and the Weigh Station Program Manager. She is responsible for programming grade crossing safety improvements and determining the proper level of warning at the approximately 4000 at-grade freight railroad crossings in the state. Additionally, she is responsible for program development and delivery of advances in the weight enforcement programs.

### Save the Date: Advancing Women , Advancing Transportation: 2021-2022 Honorary member Panel Discussion, June 21, 2022 4:30 PM.

The mission of WTS is to attract, sustain, connect, and advance women's careers to strengthen the transportation industry in every capacity. Please save the date for a panel discussion on June 21<sup>st</sup> beginning at 4:30pm (location TBD) with our 2021 and 2022 Honorary Members and moderated by Brian Funk, Deputy General Manager and Chief Operating Officer at Metro Transit. The panel will discuss current issues in workforce development, programs in our state to attract women into diverse transportation fields including manufacturing, maintenance, construction management, and rail safety and what we as WTS can do to further our mission in Minnesota. There will be a member appreciation social hour after the discussion.

## Diversity and Inclusion Article

### Many Ways to Celebrate, Honor, Learn, and Gather this May During American Indian Month

Author: Liz Morice, AICP at Kimley-Horn

Nestled in an open space between Shepard Road and I-94 in Downtown Saint Paul, sits the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. This 27-acre park is connected to Indian Burial Mounds Park and is home to natural springs, sacred caves and ancient burial mounds. It is now also the permanent residence for an augmented reality art tour, The Dakota Spirit Walk, presented by Marlena Myles (Spirit Lake Dakota) in collaboration with Todd Boss and Pixel Farm Studios. This tour features artwork by Marlena Myles, a Native American, self-taught digital artist, fabric/fashion designer and book illustrator located in Saint Paul. Myles' murals adorn several neighborhoods and museums in Minnesota and bring attention to the presence and history of the Dakota (visit her website for a free downloadable Dakota Land Map-[marlenamyles.com](https://marlenamyles.com)). She is one of many artists contributing to the events of American Indian Month, celebrated across Minnesota in the Month of May. Still to come this month are several museum tours, opportunities to learn about community initiatives, and panels featuring books authored by many Native American authors. This Saturday, May 21st at the Minneapolis Convention Center you can learn about The Falls Initiative, who's vision is to create a place of healing and celebration at Owámniyomni (meaning "turbulent waters" in the Dakota language), or St. Anthony Falls, that acknowledges the past and advances a more equitable and inclusive future.



Source: Digital Augmented Reality Art from The Dakota Spirit Walk  
(<https://marlenamyles.com>)



Source: May is American Indian Month in Minnesota, Hennepin County Library  
([Hclib.org](https://hclib.org))

Still this month: many other events to come include canoeing celebrations on Bde Maka Ska, powwows and other gatherings. For more events and ways to celebrate all year round visit <https://thecirclenews.org/events/american-indian-month-community-calendar-may-2022/> or the <https://www.hclib.org/about/news/2022/May/may-is-american-indian-month-in-minnesota>.



## PROGRAMS UPDATE

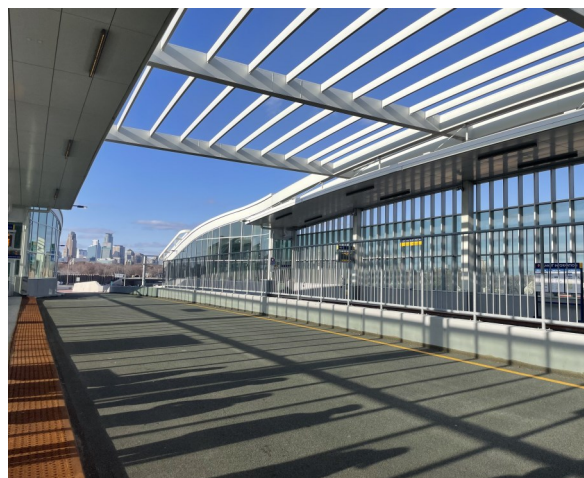
### **APRIL PROGRAM RECAP—METRO TRANSIT ORANGE LINE BRT TOUR**

WTS-MN's April program led a hands-on tour of the Twin cities' latest transitway project, the METRO Orange Line. The METRO Orange Line is a bus rapid transit (BRT) line connecting the Heart of the City in Burnsville to the MARQ2 transit corridor in downtown Minneapolis, which stops along the way.

The tour was led by Orange Line Project Managers Christina Morrison and Alicia Vap. The tour started at the 76th St & Knox Ave station in Richfield, traveled northbound on I-35W, stopping for tours of the 46th Street and Lake Street stations. The group learned about the planning and design efforts that went into making this BRT project a success.

The Orange Line project included a transitway along Knox Ave, beneath I-494, connecting the 76th St and American Blvd stations. This transitway included a multi-use trail that made it easy for the group to walk to Lucky's 13 Pub after the program to continue socializing. It was a great time to reconnect with friends and colleagues - new and old!

Learn more about the METRO Orange Line here: <https://www.metrotransit.org/orangeline>



### **MAY PROGRAM—SCHOLARSHIPS AND RECOGNITIONS RECEPTION**

Join WTS-MN on Wednesday, May 25, 2022 at the Nicollet Island Pavilion for the Scholarships and Recognitions Reception. Networking will occur between 3:30-4:15, with the program following between 4:15 and 5:30. WTS will be honoring several members for their contributions this year to WTS as well as honoring the scholarship winners. Desserts will be served, so bring your sweet tooth!

Registration closes on Friday, May 20th. [Register for the event today!](#)

## **CORPORATE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:**



### **TRANSPORTATION SERVICES OFFERED:**

Planning, Environmental, Traffic Engineering, ITS, Preliminary and Final Design, Structures and Construction Management.

### **MN OFFICES:**

MINNEAPOLIS

### **WHY ALLIANT SUPPORTS WTS MN:**

At Alliant, we build better communities with excellence and passion. We have an inclusive culture which supports diversity in our workplace and we know that organizations like WTS Minnesota are essential to advancing the transportation industry and providing scholarship, mentorship and advancement opportunities to the incredible women in our profession!



### **MN OFFICES:**

MINNEAPOLIS (2) AND THIEF RIVER

### **TRANSPORTATION SERVICES OFFERED:**

Design, planning, bridges, rail, traffic, transit, transportation architecture, design-build, strategic communications/public outreach, construction services, environmental, and project controls.

### **WHY HDR SUPPORTS WTS MN:**

At HDR, diversity is what makes us strong, both in our project work and in the leaders who guide us every day. We recruit and retain many talented women and men in the transportation industry by providing a diverse and inclusive work environment, a strong mentoring program, and an opportunity for career advancement through enriching and challenging opportunities. Key HDR staff serve on the WTS International Board of Directors in addition to chairing the WTS International Foundation Board. In Minnesota, we are honored to support our local chapter. We embrace the strengths and diversity of the communities we support, including the many outstanding women professionals who work to solve Minnesota's transportation challenges. Our company culture is designed to inspire capable, successful women. Together, we make great things possible.



*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!

**Megan Owen**— Started at Garver as a Project Manager on their Alternative Project Delivery team.

**Catherine Judd**— Started at HDR as a Senior Project Manager on their Cross Sector team .

**Shannon McGrath** - Started at WSB as Director of Asset Management.

**Bev Farraher** - Selected as one of [APWA's Top 10 Public Works Leaders for 2022](#).

### 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