



Advancing women Advancing transportation

Summer 2022 Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Dear WTS Members and Friends,



2022 is the Minnesota Chapter's 40th Anniversary! We are one of the oldest chapters in the organization, founded only five years after WTS began. Our Chapter has spent 2022 focusing on ways to feature and celebrate our 40-year history. We held a celebration event in July where key members from throughout our history gave speeches and attendees participated in activities that sparked conversations about the ways WTS has impacted them. We learned about people's first jobs in transportation and the advice they would give women in the industry. Here's some great pieces of advice we received:

- Join WTS! Get involved.
- Make friends with WTS members because they become life-long friends.
- Take on new opportunities – not just more work.
- Pretend you don't know how to make coffee or take minutes.
- Know your value and document your value.

We will continue to share the stories we documented throughout the remainder of the year and continue the conversation at the Annual Holiday Party in December. Photos from the event will be posted on our social media channels shortly.

Another initiative for our 40th Anniversary year is to get 40 new members in 2022! The Board set this target at the beginning of the year and thought it would be a stretch to achieve considering this would be about a 30% increase to our membership. But we have gained 33 new members already! Only seven new members to go and we will achieve our goal. If you are not a member or know folks who should be, please send them to the [website](#) or have them connect with our Membership Director and Chair, [Carrie Desmond](#), and [Catherine Judd](#).

Lyssa Leitner
President WTS MN Chapter

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Diversity and Inclusion Article.....	2
Programs Update	3-4
Corporate Partner Spotlight	4-5
Members on the Move.....	6



Diversity and Inclusion Article

Author: Jennifer Wiltgen, AICP at MnDOT

It's been a busy few years for the WTS D&I Committee, and we've accomplished so much under the leadership of our D&I Committee Chair Liz Morice. For this newsletter article we wanted to take a moment to review all that we've accomplished and highlight some of the things we have coming up!

In the past twelve months the committee has:

- Hosted a series of six DEI trainings with 52 participants from 16 different organizations. The training topics included: Understanding Intersectionality; Diversity Recruiting & Retention; and Bystander Intervention.
- 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.
- Worked with interested members to begin a Land Acknowledgement Action Plan.
- Presented on the trainings and best practices at the Minnesota Transportation Conference.

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

Some of the upcoming work we are considering 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.
- Support the scholarship committee in its outreach efforts.

We couldn't have achieved any of this work without the steadfast support from our committee members and the board. But we have a lot left to do. The biggest opportunity to make positive change happen is with people. We always need people power, so anyone who is interested in joining the WTS MN D&I Committee, please come! Reach out to Jennifer Wiltgen (Jennifer.wiltgen@state.mn.us) and I'll add you to the invites!

NEXT EVENT

The first meeting of the DEI Working Group will be on Friday, September 23rd from 10-11am. This group will focus on providing support in applying lessons from the WTS DEI trainings in our respective workplaces. Anyone is welcome to join, regardless of whether you attended the 2021 training series. (Note: this group is separate from the WTS MN D&I Committee, which meets monthly to support initiatives for WTS MN.) Those who have already indicated interest will receive a link for the meeting by email. Anyone else interested can email Emma Lucken at emma_lucken@berkeley.edu

Call for Help

Do you have the skills to link a Google form to a pre-formatted Word document so that each respondent's Google Forms submission generates an auto-populated copy of the Word document? If so, we are seeking someone to assist in a one-time project for the WTS scholarship application process. If you have these skills and can help, please contact Emily Bowen at Emily.Bowen@kimley-horn.com.

PROGRAMS UPDATE

JUNE PROGRAM RECAP—WTS 2021-2022 HONORARY MEMBER PANEL DISCUSSION

On Tuesday, June 21st, WTS-MN hosted our 2021-2022 Honorary Members for a panel discussion at the HDR Building. Moderated by Brian Funk, Deputy General Manager and Chief Operating Officer at Metro Transit, the panel hosted Dr. Nerita Hughes, Dean of School of Business, Careers, Education & Workforce Innovation at North Hennepin Community College, Margaret Lewis, Senior VP Manufacturing and Facilities at New Flyer Facilities, and Julie Whitcher, Minnesota State Rail Safety Engineer at MnDOT.



The panel discussed current issues in workforce development, programs in our state to attract women into diverse transportation fields, and how WTS can further our mission in Minnesota. The evening was full of lively discussion and celebration!

JULY PROGRAM RECAP—WTS-MN 40TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT

Happy 40th Anniversary, WTS-MN! Hosted at the SRF Building on July 28th, our chapter celebrated turning 40 – making us one of the oldest chapters in the organization! The program included interactive conversations, toasts from members throughout the years – including a message from Sherri Alston, a WTS-MN founding member – and lots of photos and socializing. The room was filled with an energetic group of members and guests who are sure to live out WTS-MN's legacy into the future.



PROGRAMS UPDATE (CONTINUED)

AUGUST PROGRAM RECAP—MSES & WTS-MN JOINT NETWORKING EVENT

The weather was perfect for our August program, as we teamed up with MSES again for a joint networking event at Utepils Brewery in Minneapolis. The crew spent the evening socializing with old and new friends together over tasty beverages. It was a well-attended event to round out the summer programs. Looking forward to our next joint event!



UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Stay tuned for more information of our upcoming Fall 2022 programs!

Get Involved!

Our Programs committee is already brainstorming program ideas for 2023! Please contact Allie Futhey (afuthey@isthmusengineering.com) or Erin Jordan (ejordan@sehinc.com) if you have any ideas for tours, presentations, panel discussions, etc.!

CORPORATE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:



MN OFFICES:

MINNEAPOLIS

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES OFFERED:

Program management, Alternative delivery - design-build and CM/GC, Traffic Management and ITS , Bridges and Structures, Planning, Roads and Highways, Utilities, Stormwater, Rail/Transit, Aviation, Technology, and Tolling/Managed Lanes

WHY HNTB SUPPORTS WTS MN:

WTS provides HNTB a platform for learning about professional opportunities, access to technical education, expertise and top leaders in the industry, all while focusing on diversity and inclusion and offering growth opportunities to women within the transportation industry.

At HNTB, we have made a corporate commitment to the advancement of environmental and community sustainability. In all our projects we are attentive to understand the effects of our work on environmental sustainability – from the paper we use in our documentation through design and project implementation.

CORPORATE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT (CONTINUED)



MN OFFICES:

TWIN CITIES AND ROCHESTER

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES OFFERED:

Planning, Environmental, Roadway, Municipal, Traffic, Transit, Structures, Aviation, Landscape Architecture, and more!

WHY KIMLEY-HORN SUPPORTS WTS MN:

Since 2012 Kimley-Horn has supported WTS Minnesota for their outstanding professional development, leadership, and educational opportunities afforded to our employees and this region by our local chapter. Developing leaders in the work place, awarding scholarships, and mentoring programs like Transportation YOU, we see our investment in WTS growing tomorrow's transportation leaders. WTS provides tools and networking opportunities to connect and build a strong community working towards the advancement of women in the transportation industry.



MN OFFICES:

ST. PAUL, BRAINERD

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES OFFERED:

Transportation Planning, Traffic Engineering, Highway Design & Engineering, Multi-Modal Planning & Design, Bridge Design, Environmental Documentation and Field Investigation, Cultural Resources Right-of-Way Acquisition, Survey, Construction Administration

WHY KLJ SUPPORTS WTS:

Since the 1930s, KLJ has planned, designed, and supported infrastructure across the country such as roads, runways, pipelines, and parks. We create solutions that turn visions into reality and improve the lives of people and communities. We do this by focusing on a business model that puts the customer first, providing an exceptional experience that truly reimagines what projects can become. KLJ supports WTS and the mission of broadening opportunities for all and the active role the organization takes in promoting the advancement of women in transportation. The training and networking provided by WTS creates opportunities for our future engineers, planners, and other technical staff. These opportunities help determine the paths for our next generation of transportation professionals.



***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!

Kristin Thompson— Transitioned to Director of Asset Management at Metro Transit.

Chris Beckwith— Started as the Blue Line LRT Project Director at Metro Transit.

Alicia Vap - Started as the Interim Acting Gold Line Project Director at Metro Transit.

Becca Hughes - Started at Stantec as a Senior Transportation Planner.

Ruby Daniels - Recognized in Mass Transit's 40 Under 40! See more [here](#).

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