

# The Transportation Times

ASHE DELAWARE VALLEY SECTION

2011-12 EDITION #3

*Happy Holidays from the Officers and Board of Directors  
of the Delaware Valley Section*

We wish you the best of the Season...whatever season you celebrate, and hope you find the presents you were hoping for under your tree (maybe some of those below this one?)!



*Don Stark*

*Bruce Masi*

*Stephanie Butler*

*Jeff Obrecht*    *Jeff Given*

*Elaine Elbich*    *Phil Mandato*

*Curt Shugars*    *Bob Wright*

*Pete Berthold*    *Bill Laird*    *Carlos Garcia*

*Mark Kinnee*    *Jack Mitchell*    *Don Steele*

*Dick Prentice*    *Rob Prophet*

*Slide Rules*

*PDH's and Meetings*

*Increased Funding*

*Technical Sessions*

*Networking*

*50-50 Prizes*

## A Message from President Don Stark



The holidays are almost over and unless I missed it, I didn't find a new transportation funding bill wrapped up under my Christmas tree (still looking!) I'll go out on a limb here and guess that none of you did either. So like Charlie Brown we all get to say, "Rats, no Christmas cards (presents) for me!" Despite that I hope everyone had an absolutely wonderful holiday season.

As we move into the New Year, a leap year at that, we need to look forward with hope that our great political leaders will develop a grand vision, work together by putting aside party politics, and tackle the great financial disaster that has engulfed us for the last couple of years. Ok, so collectively as you all read this there will likely be a large sigh and a groan of not a chance! One can always hope, though, and as we leap into this New Year we have one saving grace - it is an election year. We have the ability to make this a year of change. If the political leaders cannot summon up the courage to do it, then we must, and send a clear signal at election time that we want things to change.

Speaking of change, it's time get off the soap box and change the topic. 2012 is shaping up to be a great year for the Delaware Valley Section of ASHE. We will start with our annual joint meeting with ASCE in January; have another joint meeting in February, this time with MASITE; and then wrap up the year in March and April with Project of the Year, Scholarship recognition, and our own change of leadership. The meeting topics are set and will begin in January with a discussion on the New Jersey Turnpike widening.

You really can't get to northern New Jersey from the Philadelphia area without being impacted by the widening construction going on between Interchanges 6 and 9, and the number one driver distraction for an engineer is a Work Zone. We have to see what is going on, what the contractor is doing today, spout out to our passengers what the different numbers are for the signs alongside the road, or ask the proverbial question of how come they can get away with that in the field when we're not allowed to design it that way? Most people only realize that work is progressing by the change in the traffic pattern, sort of a "wow, this wasn't this way yesterday!" This is a sure tip to any engineer that they really need to look over the work zone, see what is going on, analyze it, and comment (mentally if alone or out loud if with someone) on whether they are really doing it correctly. Cell phone distractions pale in comparison to an engineer in a work zone!

Now if you're driving through this work zone in New Jersey and actually doing all that and not paying attention to all the traffic zipping around, then you really are distracted. So if you have decided that you really need to pay more attention to that nut case driver next to you than the work zone, come out to the January meeting and get the low down, the buildup, and the what to look for next scoop on the New Jersey Turnpike. Oh yeah, you'll also get a PDH!

## 2011-12 Meeting Dates – Plan to Be There!

In order to help you plan your attendance at our Section's meetings for the coming season, here is the schedule of meeting dates. The remaining meetings for this season, after January, will follow the third-Wednesday pattern and will be conducted on

**February 15**  
**March 21**  
**April 18**

Meeting topics will be announced in each monthly meeting announcement flyer. Technical Sessions have also been scheduled for February and April (see page 4 for more information).

## Happy Birthday to Us - Our Section Turns 45 in January

**MILE**  
**45**

The Delaware Valley Section was formed in 1966 with a total of 69 members. The Section's Charter was approved by ASHE National on January 25, 1967, as the tenth Section in the then-fledgling ASHE organization. (ASHE was founded in 1956, with the Harrisburg Section holding Charter #1.)

**HOLD THE DATE!**

**17<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GOLF OUTING**  
**Monday, July 16**

**Blue Bell Country Club**

**Delaware Valley Section  
Officers and Board of  
Directors  
2011-12 Season**

**Don Stark, President**  
Ammann & Whitney Inc.  
**Bruce Masi, First Vice President**  
Gannett Fleming Inc.  
**Stephanie Butler, Second Vice President**  
McMahon Associates Inc.  
**Jeff Obrecht, Treasurer**  
Apex Companies LLC  
**Jeff Given, Secretary**  
Loftus Construction Inc.

**Board of Directors**  
Term expires 2012

**Elaine Elbich**  
Penna. Dept. of Transportation  
**Phil Mandato**  
Felix Mandato & Sons Inc.  
**Curt Shugars**  
Pennoni Associates Inc.  
**Bob Wright**  
Urban Engineers Inc.

Term expires 2013

**Pete Berthold**  
Penna. Dept. of Transportation  
**Bill Laird**  
Clough, Harbour & Associates

Term expires 2014

**Carlos Garcia**  
Dawood Engineering Inc.  
**Mark Kinnee**  
Urban Engineers Inc.  
**Jack Mitchell**  
McMahon Associates Inc.  
**Don Steele**  
Penna. Turnpike Commission

**Rob Prophet, Regional Director**  
Traffic Planning & Design Inc.

**Dick Prentice, Past President**  
(ASHE National)  
McMahon Associates Inc.

The Section is attempting to have the several components of the Society (contractors/suppliers, government/DOT and consultants) appropriately and proportionately represented on our Board. **We are keeping one vacant Board position open for a representative of one of these areas in order to retain this balance. If you meet these requirements and are interested in serving on the Board, we would like to hear from you.**

We have also attempted to streamline our Board to operate more efficiently and to have standing committees report to, rather than necessarily being chaired by, Board members.

**DVSP Member Firms 2011-12 \* THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

**\*\*\* Five-Year Participants \*\*\***



**ASHE Mission Statement** *Provide a forum for members and partners of the highway industry to promote a safe, efficient and sustainable highway system through education, innovation and fellowship*

**Technical Sessions – Two More Scheduled**

Technical Sessions are being scheduled for **February 15** and **April 18** and will be conducted prior to the Section dinner meetings in each case. More information will be provided in separate flyers to be sent for notice of and registration for these Sessions.

As always, if you have any thoughts on topics or would like to present a session, please pass this along and the Board will explore it. This year’s schedule is filled, but we will consider topics for the 2012-13 season.

**Nominations for Section Officers About to Open**

The Delaware Valley Section will shortly be opening nominations for new Officers and Directors for the 2012-13 season. We anticipate that several vacancies will open on the Section’s Board of Directors for terms ending in 2015 as well as the Second Vice President position.

Nominations can be made to First Vice President Bruce Masi ([bmasi@gfnet.com](mailto:bmasi@gfnet.com) or 610-650-8101, x7246). **Nominations are due by February 15** (the date of our February Section/Board meeting). The proposed slate of incoming nominees will be announced at the March Section meeting.

You can contact Bruce for a list of open offices and positions on the Board of Directors.

**So You Want To Be On A Section Committee... ?**

Our Section Committees and Committee chairs are listed below. If you have an interest in being part of any Committee, please contact Section President Don Stark or Section Director/Editor Bob Wright (contact information is provided on page 7):

<i>ASHE/PennDOT Relations/Seminar Audit Dinner Meetings, Social, Society Relations 50/50 Golf Hotel Membership</i>	Elaine Elbich  Don Stark Don Steele  Carlos Garcia Rob Prophet Phil Mandato Bruce Masi	<i>Newsletter Nominating Program Project of the Year Public Relations Scholarships Technical Papers Technical Sessions Website</i>	Bob Wright Stephanie Butler Stephanie Butler Bill Laird Mark Kinnee Peter Berthold Curt Shugars Jack Mitchell Rob Prophet
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**Professional Development Update**

As you may be aware, professional engineers, land surveyors and geologists in Pennsylvania are required to obtain continued professional development (CPD) credit to renew their licenses. The current licensing period started on October 1, 2011 and licenses in this period will expire on September 30, 2013.

As you may also have heard, New Jersey has instituted requirements for continuing education effective January 12, 2011. A current licensee will be required to obtain 15 continuing professional competency credits during the current licensure period (which expires April 30, 2012), two of which shall be in professional practice ethics, to meet the requirements for the 2012-14 biennial renewal period. The Section is pursuing the approval of our qualifying meetings and Technical Sessions for credit in New Jersey. We will keep you informed on this.

Our Section’s meeting program and Technical Sessions will be able to count toward your continuing education requirement for most states and a verification program is in place to help you obtain and track your PDH’s. Sign-in sheets are maintained on our website ([www.ashedv.org](http://www.ashedv.org)) for your reference and use. Please remember to sign the sheets at the end of each meeting.

**DVSP Program in Full Swing**

The Section started the D.V.S.P. Program in the 2005-06 season to allow supporting firms to be recognized. We are proud to note that 15 firms are participating in the Program so far this season. The logos of the sponsors are displayed on page 3.

The cost for the “basic” level of support (\$100) will remain as it has been since the start of the program. As begun last season, we are once again offering a “website” level, which, for \$150, will allow your logo to be placed on our website as well as in THE TRANSPORTATION TIMES, with a hyperlink directly to your website.

Many thanks to those of you who have signed up and helped support the Section’s many activities. As you may be aware, the proceeds of the D.V.S.P. go directly to support the Section’s Scholarship Fund.

If you are not in this Program and would like to join, please contact Section President Don Stark or Director/Editor of THE TRANSPORTATION TIMES Bob Wright (contact information is given on page 7).

## 2011 Project of the Year Competition

**The Project of the Year competition is now open for submissions.** The program will follow the two-category format, with separate awards for "large" and "small" projects. The breakpoint between the two classifications will be determined once submissions have been made, unlike in past years when this was divided at \$10 million, to allow more flexibility in the decision making. Projects must have been completed in 2011, be located within the geographic boundaries of the Section and nominated by an ASHE member in good standing. **Applications are due on March 2.**

Please visit the Section website ([www.ashedv.org](http://www.ashedv.org)) for more information and applications.

## Donna Prentice Memorial Section Scholarship Competition – Applications Received, Candidates Being Evaluated

The Section's Scholarship Program continues to be successful. The Program was started by the Section in 1972. Over the almost 40 years of its existence, it has benefited numerous local college students, many of whom have gone on to become ASHE members after graduation.

Eleven applicants have submitted their information for consideration and these are being reviewed. Those selected for awards will be notified in January and invited to be the Section's guests at our February Section meeting to be cited accordingly.

The Scholarship was renamed in honor of the late **Donna Prentice**, wife of longtime Section member Dick Prentice, in 2003.

## Delaware Valley Engineers Week 2012 – Right Around the Corner...

Currently, the Delaware Valley Engineers Week Committee is in need of volunteers to assist in the many activities surrounding Engineers Week. If you are interested in volunteering or have any questions on the various volunteer opportunities, please contact the Committee at [www.dvewc.org](http://www.dvewc.org).

The Committee will offer these events related to Engineers Week. Please note the dates in your calendar. More information will be provided as details are finalized. Please check our website ([www.dvewc.org](http://www.dvewc.org)) for updates.

### AWARDS AND PROCLAMATION LUNCHEON

Friday, February 17  
Doubletree Hotel, Center City  
Philadelphia

The Awards and Proclamation Luncheon will include:

- A poster session with presentation of student paper winners from 11:00 am to 12 noon
- Engineers Week Awards and Scholarships will be presented
- Engineers Week proclamations will be displayed
- The Engineer of the Year and Young Engineer of the Year will make brief remarks

### YOUNG ENGINEER SOCIAL EVENT

Tuesday, February 21  
Location to be announced

This will be a happy hour/social networking event geared to younger engineers. The Young Engineer of the Year will make brief remarks.

### CELEBRATION OF ENGINEERING RECEPTION

Thursday, February 23  
Pyramid Club, Center City Philadelphia

The culminating event of Engineers Week will be a social/networking gala event to celebrate engineering and the accomplishments of engineers. There will be cocktails, appetizer stations, and dessert stations. Other features of the event include:

- Award recipients will be honored with posters/ exhibits/running PowerPoint in the networking area
- Future City Competition Regional winners will display their first-place model

The Engineer of the Year and Young Engineer of the year will provide brief remarks, followed by a brief recognition of the Hall of Fame, Outstanding Service, and Engineering Achievement award recipients

Please visit [www.dvewc.org](http://www.dvewc.org) for updates and the latest information.

To show our support of Engineers Week activities, our Section has sponsored a banner which will be displayed on the streets of Center City Philadelphia during Engineers Week, as it was last year (the first year of the banner program). Please look for the banners on Broad Street and Locust Street adjacent to the DoubleTree Hotel during Engineers Week.

**Tim Haahs, PE, AIA**, President of Timothy H. Haahs and Associates (TimHaahs) has been elected as the 2012 Delaware Valley Engineer of the Year and will be formally installed as the Engineer of the Year during Engineers Week. We hope you will be able to participate in at least one of the planned events to congratulate Tim on this honor.

## PSPE Philadelphia Chapter National Engineers Week Banquet

The Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers, Philadelphia Chapter, will conduct its 2012 National Engineers' Week Banquet on Saturday, February 25 at Springfield Country Club (400 West Sproul Road, Springfield). The price per person is \$60 before February 17, \$75 afterward. Please visit [www.pspe-philly.org](http://www.pspe-philly.org) for details and information on the evening's agenda as well as reservations.

## Dinner Meetings/Technical Sessions Costs

Dinner Meeting prices for the 2011-12 season will be held at \$35 with advance reservations (by the reservation deadline) and \$45 for after the deadline/at the door, the same as last season. The cost for public employees and students will remain at \$20. These costs remain low compared to those charged by other technical groups as we strive to negotiate the best deals we can with our provider to keep costs as low as we can.

Additionally, Technical Sessions, which had been free in the past, will remain free for Section members (another benefit of ASHE membership!). Non-members wishing to attend will be assessed a \$40 charge for each Technical Session.

## Training/Continuing Education Opportunities

NTM Engineering will conduct a two-day session on BMP's for Erosion and Sediment Control Plans which will include the use of the new PADEP Erosion and Sediment Control BMP Manual. This will be held in King of Prussia on February 22 and 23 (two all-day sessions worth 16 PDH's). Seating is limited and the registration deadline is February 10. Please visit [www.ntmtraining.com](http://www.ntmtraining.com) to register and for additional information and details.

## Members in Transportation/Transition

### Stover Joins JBC

JBC Associates, Inc. is pleased to announce that Section Past President Brian A. Stover, PE, CCM, has joined the firm as Senior Vice President. Brian has over 30 years experience in the construction management industry. He serves as the leader of the firm's Construction Management Services operation, with responsibility for business development and growth, technical oversight, quality assurance, financial management, staffing and planning.

Brian is on the Board of Governors of the Construction Management Certification Institute (CMCI) of the Construction Management Association of America (CMAA), and is past President of local chapters for CMAA, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), and ASHE. He holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Pennsylvania and is a licensed Professional Engineer in eight states.

## Five Myths About Your Gasoline Taxes

This article was developed by CNN and co-authored by **Shin-pei Tsay**, Director of the Leadership Initiative for Transportation Solvency in the Energy and Climate Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and **Deborah Gordon**, nonresident senior associate in Carnegie's Energy and Climate Program. It provides some insights into what our energy and gasoline taxes are funding and how this is falling short of what we need. While almost all of us in the highway and transportation industry are aware of this, we provide this for your use and sharing with those who may believe our taxes are already too high.

America is the world's biggest oil consumer and its gasoline taxes are lower than most nations.

A perpetual deadlock in Congress has resulted in eight extensions of the national transportation bill, causing roads to crumble, bridges to fall, and transit to break down. Come March, politicians will once again enter into a political debate about funding American mobility. Without a fiscal safety net in place, the Highway Trust Fund will go broke.

The Republican majority in Congress won't permit the transfer of federal funds from its general spending account to bolster the Highway Trust Fund. And despite the rationality of a user-fee system, neither party will lead the charge to raise the gasoline tax. Few taxes provoke more fury than those at the fuel pump and 2012 is an election year.

In reality, cutting the gas tax exacts a steep cost on the entire economy. The gas tax funds a broad range of economy-bolstering transportation projects across the country and it is already too low to meet current (and future) infrastructure needs. It's time to debunk the myths surrounding the maligned gas tax.

### 1. Americans already pay too much in gas taxes. *Not even close.*

America actually taxes gasoline less than most other nations. Only two countries - Kuwait and Saudi Arabia - charge lower gas taxes than the U.S. and both are net global oil suppliers, not consumers. The U.S. is the world's largest oil consumer. By under-taxing gasoline - and thus under-pricing gasoline - the United States encourages over-dependency. Furthermore, the federal gas

tax does not even come close to covering the wide array of external social costs of driving cars and trucks

## 2. Gas taxes rise every year. *Quite the opposite.*

The federal gas tax has remained unchanged at 18.4 cents for a gallon of gasoline (and 24.4 cents for diesel) for nearly two decades. It is not indexed to the price of crude oil or inflation, so Americans pay a fixed amount whether oil prices are high or low. Ironically, given today's debate, the last time the gas tax was raised in 1993 was for deficit-reduction purposes. Taking inflation into account, the gas tax has eroded to only 11 cents today. This has seriously diminished the ability to pay for infrastructure, with a purchasing power of 45 cents in gas taxes for every dollar in national highway construction costs. This means that only one-half of the transportation investments made since 1993 could be afforded today, even though GDP has grown 55% and demands (vehicle miles traveled) have grown 29%.

## 3. Gas taxes are unnecessary because the transportation system is paid for in other ways. *Not so fast.*

America's transportation system is going broke. Revenue for the Highway Trust Fund is derived almost entirely from federal gas taxes and distributed to all 50 states. It covers nearly 80% of the capital costs of federally-funded transportation projects, with states carrying the remainder. From 2008 to 2010, Congress transferred \$34.5 billion from general fund revenues to make up the funding shortfall. This stopgap measure was necessary to continue projects that are already in the works. Moreover, deferred maintenance - the failure to care for existing roads and bridges - combined with lost productivity are estimated to add more than \$100 billion to the national deficit annually.

Over time, technology will help expand mobility options and improve system efficiency. This includes the ability to track real-time data and charge for system use and facilitate trip decision-making through virtual communications - social networking, skype, real-time ride-sharing, and on-line meetings. These 21st-century interactions will bolster economic productivity and competitiveness. But they will take time to mature and, in the near-term, will not obviate the need for travel. Moreover, a dedicated source of revenues, such as gas taxes or other user-based fees, will remain critical to fund and facilitate the transition

In short, the transportation system is a critical component of America's economy. The United States cannot be a superpower if it starves public investment in infrastructure. Taxes tend to be more politically acceptable when people understand how funds provide benefits. And nobody understands better than travelers that the nation's infrastructure needs serious improvements. It's time to face the fact: **The gas tax is a good way to invest in America.**

This is available on line at <http://www.cnn.com/2011/11/18/opinion/tsay-gordon-gas-tax-myths/index.html>. Thanks to CNN for this.

## From the Editor...

THE TRANSPORTATION TIMES, the newsletter of the Delaware Valley Section, is published and distributed to our members to advise and update all on current events and happenings in the Section.

If you have news items for future editions of THE TRANSPORTATION TIMES, please feel free to contact us.

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to technology-oriented transportation solutions.

## 4. Transportation taxes are detrimental to American competitiveness. *Wrong.*

The reverse is true when it comes to gas taxes. Investing in transportation facilitates reinvestment in America that is vital to economic growth. The U.S., once No. 1 in the world for its infrastructure, has fallen to 15th. China and India are cruising ahead with transportation infrastructure investments each at 9% of GDP compared to 2% in the U.S. This lackluster level of investment prevails despite well-documented needs – aging infrastructure, growing population, and shifting demographics. An upgraded, well-maintained, operationally-efficient transportation system, on the other hand, offers a significant competitive edge. Plus, the gas tax spreads the burden over hundreds of millions of system beneficiaries.

Beyond system efficiency gains, vehicles themselves are becoming more fuel-efficient and less wasteful. A proposal to double car- and SUV-fuel economy standards by 2025, while highly beneficial in terms of energy, will translate into lower gas tax expenditures by higher-mpg cars. The rational way to deal with this is to increase gas taxes slightly over time to account for the fiscal impacts that cleaner, more efficient cars have on transportation infrastructure investments.

## 5. Gas taxes make an already volatile gasoline market even worse. *Partial thinking.*

Domestic gas prices are largely influenced by world oil markets. With transportation accounting for about 70% of U.S. oil consumption and record oil-company profits reached when world oil prices go up, it's only fair that oil companies share the cost of providing transportation infrastructure. Structuring an oil fee assessed on producers and a variable gas tax paid by consumers can further stabilize the price at the pump. When oil prices go up, the retail gas tax can be abated. The oil security fee will make up for the revenue gap. When oil prices go down, the gas tax can be slowly reinstated. There isn't much that can be done about external events that affect global oil price volatility, but gas taxes can be designed to better manage abrupt price swings domestically.