



The Small Firm Connector

From the Chair—Rob Overfield, P.E.

ARE YOU A SMALL FIRM ?

Inside this issue:

From the Chair	1
Dues Invoices	1
Fall Conference Update	2
Winter Meeting	2
AASHTO Audit Guide	3
Online Seminars	
RCEP	3
Calendar of Events	4
Steering Committee	4

We are constantly asked what the size limit is for being a member of Small Firms Council. Our Steering Committee has pondered this issue in the past and had a good discussion at our last bi-monthly teleconference. Historically, thirty employees has been considered the limit for membership. That benchmark has been in-place since the inception of the Small Firms Coalition in 1989.

Many industry experts suggested that as a firm grew beyond the 30-employee level, management efforts demanded more and more time from those who were responsible for guiding company operations. Expertise in marketing, human resources, accounting, strategic planning, day-to-day operations, and other areas became a necessity that could not be efficiently handled by a single individual.

That may not be the case anymore. Increased opportunities for advanced leadership training and significant improvements in software applications may have moved that benchmark. A business leader may still be able to “wear numerous hats” in their operation as they grow beyond 30 employees. We like to think that the Small Firms Council has been a part of that improved ability to manage more employees.

So, the Steering Committee has determined that firm size is not the overriding factor in membership in the Small Firms Council anymore. If you “feel like a small firm and act like a small firm”, you probably are a small firm and we welcome your participation. Join today and start benefiting from the many things Small Firms Council has to offer you, your staff, and your firm. The Small Firm Council Steering Committee welcomes your feedback and participation, please contact Heather Talbert at htalbert@acec.org with your comments and/or suggestions.

Thank you to
our sponsors!



Dues Invoices Now Payable—Reminder

Dues invoices are now due. We are very optimistic about what SFC can do for its members and we hope you feel the same way and choose to continue your membership.

If you need another copy of your invoice, please contact Small Firm Council Executive Director Heather Talbert at htalbert@acec.org or 202-682-4377.



ACEC Fall Conference Update

Over 700 attendees enjoyed great weather as the ACEC Fall Conference kicked-off in Palm Springs, CA. Many excellent sessions were held on how to Engineer America's Recovery. Back by popular demand at this year's conference was the two part *Ownership Transition* sessions moderated by Colvin Matheson of Matheson Financial Services. This session highlighted the key valuation approaches and how to structure a successful ownership transition. The session emphasized how increasing firm profits plus sound financial accounting to perpetuate growth for the next generations of owners are key to successful transitions.

A panel of small firm owners (Mark Hamouz, John Forcier, Rod Hoffman), who have been on both sides of a transition, spoke from experience about the internal politics of a firm that must be considered in order to ensure the firm continues to thrive under its new leadership. They also stressed several things they might have done differently if they were to go through the experience again.

A full house at the Small Firm CEO Roundtable discussed several items of concern, including benefits to employees (health, life, etc), employee compensation. This event continues to be one of the signature events of the conference and provides valuable experience and ideas from peers, not competitors. The next Small Firm CEO Roundtable will be held in conjunction with the Small Firm Council Winter Meeting in February.

At the Small Firm Council Member meeting, discussion centered on increasing membership in SFC, a presentation on the new AASHTO Audit Guide, white paper on Use of Small Business Initiatives plus the upcoming winter meeting in New Orleans.

If you were unable to attend the Fall Conference, we urge you to put the ACEC Annual Convention on your calendar, April 25-28, 2010 in Washington, DC. More information will be sent out in the near future.



2010 Small Firm Winter Meeting

The 2010 Winter Meeting and Seminar including the ever popular CEO Roundtable will be February 19-20, 2010 in New Orleans, LA at the Royal Sonesta Hotel right on Bourbon Street.

Once again the seminar will feature *David Burstein of PSMJ Resources* back again for a more in-depth look at issues such as Ownership Transition and Human Resources activities in a small firm. For those of you who didn't attend last year's Bootcamp program, a refresher on key issues like project management and financial management will also be given.

New this year will be a networking dinner taking place immediately following the seminar on Friday night.

Registration is now [available](#) so please mark your calendar for this important seminar and meeting taking place in the Big Easy!



AASHTO Uniform Audit and Accounting Guide Online Seminar Series

The full listing of Audit Guide programs offered in ACEC's online seminar series is below. Due to the popularity of the sessions, we are recommending that you sign up early so we are able to properly process your registration.

Nov. 5th [New Rules on Allowable and Reasonable Compensation](#)

Nov. 10th [New State DOT Compensation and Audit Rules That Will Affect Your Bottom Line](#)

Nov. 12th [Basic FAR Compliance in a Time of Increased Government Oversight](#)

Nov. 18th [New Guidance for Successful Overhead Audits](#)

Dec. 3rd [Basic FAR Compliance in a Time of Increased Government Oversight](#)



Portal for Education & Career Recordkeeping

Gone are the days when professionals kept paper files. With RCEP, everything needed to find courses from quality providers and maintain PDH history is available online at www.rcep.net. The Registered Continuing Education Program (RCEP) is a nationwide portal for education and career recordkeeping. It is a merger of quality education providers and engineers, surveyors, and related Architecture/Engineering/Construction industry professionals into one comprehensive education management system. The first of its kind in the industry, RCEP is a one-stop solution for keeping up-to-date with continuing education requirements, finding courses from quality providers, and maintaining a complete education record that simplifies the licensure renewal process.

With RCEP, it's now possible to obtain and track all of your Professional Development Hours (PDHs) and licensing requirements in one, comprehensive, online system. Log into www.rcep.net to get started. Search the Master Calendar of educational courses offered by NCEES-approved Education Providers. Find state licensing and continuing education requirements or be ready in the event you're audited with RCEP's uniformly formatted, state-board-accepted transcripts. Let Registered Education Providers report your PDHs for you or simply self-report PDHs you've earned through other education providers to maintain a complete post-licensure record.

Professionals can register for a free, basic subscription at www.rcep.net, and start managing their continuing education activities right away.

For more information, contact Maria Buscemi at 202-682-4323 or mbuscemi@acec.org.

"RCEP is a one-stop solution for keeping up-to-date with continuing education requirements, finding courses from quality providers, and maintaining a complete education record that simplifies the licensure renewal process."





SMALL FIRM COUNCIL



1015 15th St., NW
8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005-2605

Phone: 202-682-4377
Fax: 202-898-0068
E-mail: htalbert@acec.org
Website: www.acec.org/sfc

Since 1990, the Small Firm Council (SFC) has represented and advanced small business interests of ACEC's small firms. SFC provides a forum for ACEC to focus solely on the needs of small firms.

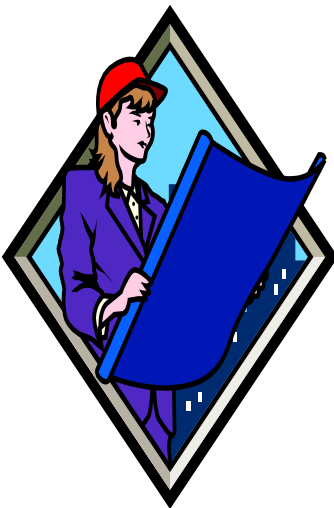
SFC goals :

- Identify and influence important federal, state and local initiatives that directly impact small firms.
- Work with health, professional liability, and business insurance industries to improve access and affordability for members.
- Develop business education products and seminars focused on the specific needs of small firms.
- Provide a forum to develop solutions to the unique needs of small firm owners.

#####

Calendar of Events

- Feb. 19-20: Small Firm Council Winter Meeting and Seminar
Royal Sonesta Hotel, New Orleans, LA
- Apr. 25-28: ACEC Annual Convention
Washington, DC



Small Firm Council Steering Committee

The following Small Firm Council Steering Committee members are here to serve your needs. Please feel free to contact any of the members at their email addresses shown below.

Chair:

Rob Overfield, Engineering Associates, robertov@eaengineers.com

Past Chair:

Gregg Ten Eyck, Leonard Rice Engineers, Inc., teneyck@lrwe.com

Steering Committee Members:

John Forcier, Forcier Aldrich & Associates, jforcier@forcieraldrich.com

Karen Friese, K. Friese & Associates, Inc., kfriese@kfriese.com

Mark Hamouz, LONCO, Inc., mhamouz@lonco.com

Helen M. Himes, HH Engineering, Ltd., hhimes@hhengltd.com

Kevin M. McCormick, Miller Consulting Engineers, Inc., kevin@miller-se.com

Cathy S. Ritter, The Constellation Design Group, Inc., critter@constellationdesign.com

H. Kenneth White, H. Kenneth White & Associates, Inc., hkwhite@hkwhite.com

Executive Director:

Heather Talbert, ACEC, htalbert@acec.org