

Best Practices Information Request Form

Sections and Branches

The Leader Training Committee (LTC) is continuously expanding their Best Practices Guide to document successful activities and practices in our Sections and Branches.

Please use this form (Word format) to document your group's successful activity so we can share it with other leaders. We strongly encourage you to attach relevant graphics and photos (either embedded in the Word document or as attachments, PDF, jpg, tif, or other formats). We will incorporate the new Best Practice in the Guide and post it to the web site. Please return your completed form to Brian Pawula at blpawula@hornershifrin.com and/or Nancy Berson at nberson@asce.org.

Date	9/10/2024
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PROJECT TITLE	The Bridge Program
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1. Section/Branch	ASCE Dallas Branch
2. Section/Branch Size	Medium
3. Project Contact	
Name	Nalah Williams
Phone Number	214-683-9648
Email	nalah@goldenmaneproperty.com
4. Project Category	Membership Development
5. Project Description	The Bridge Program is an initiative designed to equip young engineers with essential knowledge and skills necessary for transitioning smoothly from college graduation to the professional realm. Its primary aim is to 'bridge' the gap between entry-level engineering and seasoned professionals by covering topics that equip young engineers for success. The program includes different types of events (presentations, panel discussions, etc.) which aim to provide knowledge to our younger members.
6. The Process (What you did, When and How)	The Bridge Program was started in the Spring of 2021 by Ed Penton and Samantha Vail at the ASCE Dallas Branch after a discussion between recent graduate, Samantha, and seasoned engineer, Ed, in which they recognized a significant gap in resources for young engineers seeking comprehensive insights into the engineering industry. Since its inception, the program has been led by the ASCE Dallas Bridge Chair with the aid of the Younger Member Committee to host events

	<p>ranging from presentations, networking happy hours, and professional panel discussions which focus on providing vital skills and knowledge to our early-career level ASCE Dallas members.</p>
<p>7. Those in Charge (Committee, Task Committee, Etc.)</p>	<p>Bridge Program Chair: Plans and coordinates all details of the bridge program events including brainstorming ideas, reaching out to speakers, finding a meeting space, and delegating planning tasks to the younger member committee.</p> <p>Branch Director: Assists with brainstorming event ideas, aids in the logistics of event planning, and coordinates events with the rest of the ASCE Dallas Branch.</p> <p>Younger Member Committee: Aids in the logistics of planning events in any tasks delegated by the Bridge Program Chair. (Ex. Social Media Posts, newsletter invites, finding speakers, etc.)</p>
<p>8. Time Frame (When Started, When Completed)</p>	<p>Spring 2021 – Ongoing</p>
<p>9. Success Factors (The Parts that Worked Really Well)</p>	<p>The most successful factor of this program is that it achieved its initial goal of providing our younger members with knowledge and resources tailored to their career-level through relevant and interesting presentation topics and events.</p> <p>Over the 3 years that the program has been active we have been able to provide presentations on many pertinent topics, with presentations given by top executives at influential companies. Some examples of speakers and topics from recent events include,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Wendy Lopez Career Journey: Discussion and Q&A” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Wendy Lopez (Sr. Vice President & Texas Executive - AECOM)</i> - <i>Dev Rastogi (Sr. Vice President Gulf Coast RBL & Dallas Executive – AECOM)</i> • “Workplace Culture and Leadership Development” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Alberta Blair (Director of Public Works – Dallas County)</i> - <i>Mark Bouma (Sr. Corridor Manager – NTTA)</i> <p>By hosting presentations such as these, the Bridge Program has supplied valuable information to our members and provided an avenue for them to ask questions to some of the industry's most seasoned engineers.</p>

10. Setback Factors

(The Parts that did Not Work Well)

In addition to dealing with setbacks from the program being started during a worldwide pandemic, there were some additional challenges our team faced when trying to target younger members. Some of the bigger challenges included,


- **Timing:** Originally, the program was held from 1:00-2:00 pm, directly after the regularly scheduled branch membership meeting. This worked well during the all-virtual meetings held during the pandemic in 2021, but once meetings returned to in-person, attendance dropped. We heard from many younger members that they didn't feel comfortable taking such a long break from work in the middle of the day. For this reason, we began holding Bridge Program events in the evening and attendance increased.
- **Budget:** It has been noted that attendance at younger member events drops sharply when there is a registration cost (even if it is small). For this reason, every effort was made to keep the Bridge Program events free-to-attend.

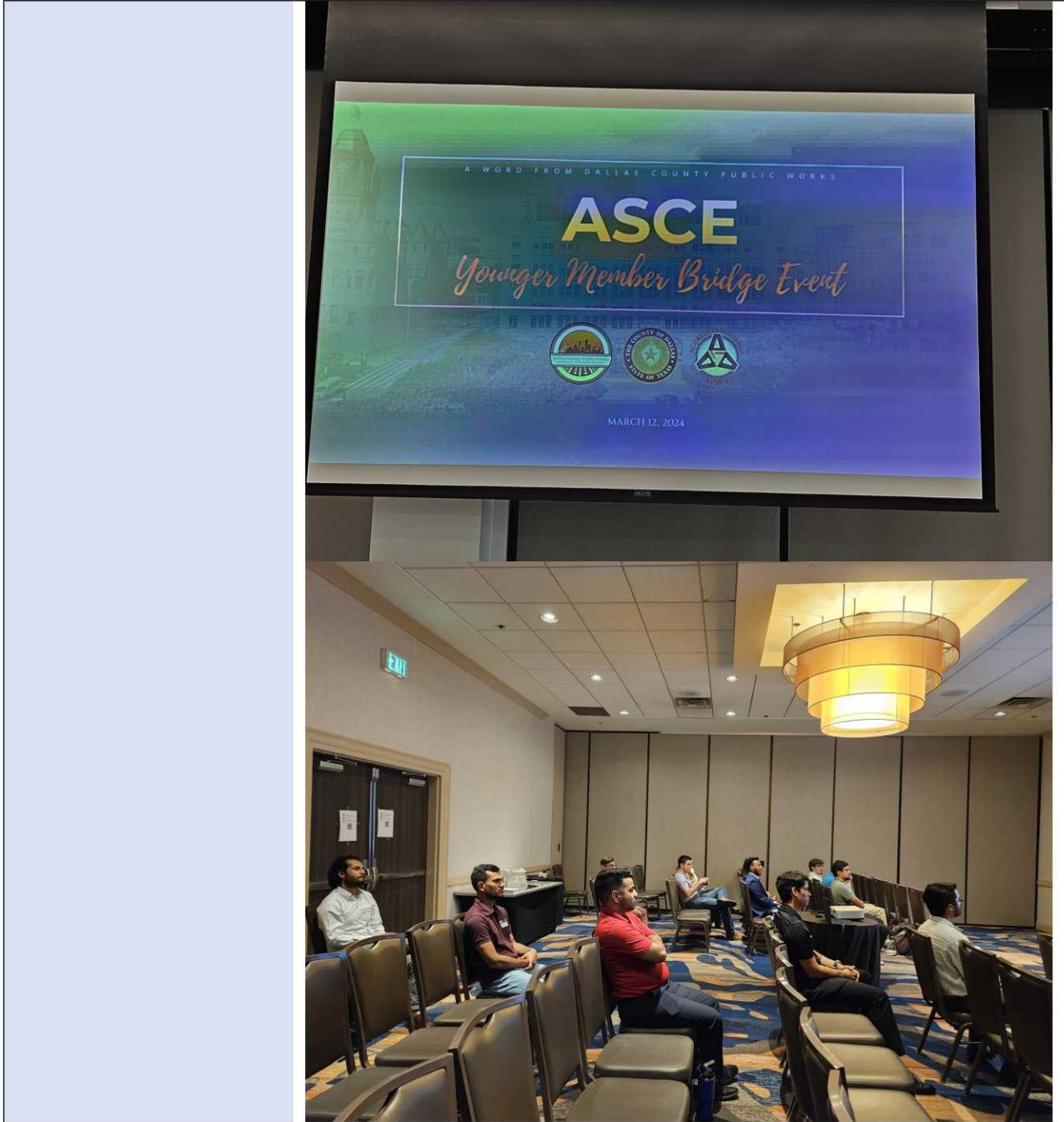
11. Creativity

(This is something off the wall that we did)

- **Venue Location:** To keep events free-to-attend and stay within our 2024 Bridge Program budget of \$500, we had to find creative ways to host low-cost events. The most challenging part was finding a free venue to host a group of 20 or more people after 5:00pm, since this is the timeframe when younger members are more likely to attend. This year, we experimented with hosting evening events at the offices of our members and/or speakers with success. By saving money on the venue, we were able to use our budget to make the events even more enjoyable by providing snacks/light refreshments.
- **Speaker Topics:** Because the Bridge Program was designed to fill a gap in knowledge that younger professionals experience, it took some creativity to come up with presentation topics that would be useful for our members, and cover topics they maybe didn't even know they needed! We surveyed our younger members and held team brainstorming sessions to come up with interesting topics which we then hosted as presentations, including:
 - *Virtual Meeting Etiquette*
 - *Differences in Working in the Public and Private sector*
 - *Staying Organized: Good practices for file documentation and general project organization*
 - *Engineering Certifications: What do all those letters after someone's name mean?*
 - *Negotiation Basics and the ASCE Salary Survey*
 - *Networking Workshop*
 - And many more!

12. Administration (What was most Important?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise events early on social media/newsletter/website • Survey younger members for topic ideas • Good communication with speakers (early notice, clear event details, follow up with thank you e-mail, etc.)
13. Follow-Up (What was most important?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up with members to see which presentations they found most helpful and if they have any ideas for future topics.
14. Recommendations (What you should ALWAYS do with this project?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant and interesting meeting topics/content is the most important part of this program and the reason it was started. • We also found that it was very important to have consistently scheduled events to have regular attendees.
15. Cautions (What you should NEVER do with this project?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't charge a high registration cost for events because it greatly reduces attendance. • Don't host events during the 9-5 work hours because this greatly reduces attendance
16. The Outcome	<p>This program has helped many of our younger members feel more confident in the workplace, has answered questions many of our members had but didn't know who to ask, and has also provided a setting to build professional connections. One of our ASCE Dallas members provided the following quote from their experience with the Bridge Program.</p> <p><i>"The ASCE bridge program encouraged me to become more active in pursuing leadership roles and additional volunteer opportunities outside of my regular ASCE Dallas responsibilities. I ended up volunteering as CECON chair in part due to the importance the speakers from our Bridge program put on everyone's responsibility of advancing our industry and the importance of networking and staying up to date with the current practices. This "push in the back" to not shy away from leadership opportunities I got from the bridge program, and the benefit that can come from seeking growth opportunities, has opened many doors for me since then and has even led to career growth for me."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Carlos Balderrama, PE</p>
17. Ongoing Activity (Would you do it again?)	<p>The program is currently still ongoing and improving each year. We have recently increased our budget for the program in 2023-2024 and have added a Bridge Program Chair to our leadership roster.</p>
18. Speaker Contact Information (person from your group who would be willing to speak about the Best Practice)	

Name	Nalah Williams
Phone Number	214-683-9648
Email	nalah@goldenmanproperty.com
19. Additional Comments (We strongly recommend attaching relevant photos and graphics)	Event Photos: 







Past Event Flyers:





ASCE DALLAS - BRIDGE PROGRAM PRESENTS

**Engineering
Certifications / Panel
Discussion on
Pursuing Future
Education**

MONDAY JUNE 14, 2021
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

ASCE
DALLAS BRANCH

ASCE DALLAS
YM BRIDGE
EVENT

12 MARCH 2024
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM



ALBERTA BLAIR, PE
Director of Public Works - Dallas County
Dallas County Public Works
500 Elm Street
Dallas, Texas 75202
7th floor - Records Building, Customer Excellence TRM Conference Room



MARK BOUMA, PE
Senior Corridor Manager - NTTA



ASCE DALLAS-BRIDGE PROGRAM PRESENTS:

VIRTUAL MEETINGS 101- ETIQUETTES IN VIRTUAL MEETINGS

PRESENTED BY JONATHAN BROWER, P.E.
OPEN PANEL DISCUSSION AND INTRODUCING
MICROSOFT TEAMS FEATURES
AFTER PRESENTATION.

MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2021
1:00 PM-2:00 PM

The poster features a dark blue background with a faint image of a person in a virtual meeting. A yellow triangle is in the bottom right corner. The text is white and yellow.