



Texas Department of Transportation
Professional Engineering
Procurement Services Division

Surfing the Waves of Knowledge



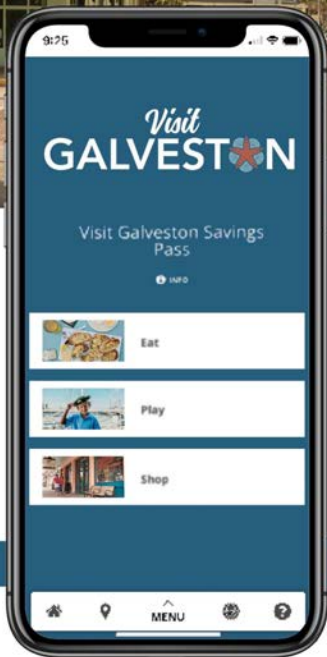
2024 TxDOT Professional Engineering Procurement Services Conference

Moody Gardens Hotel | Galveston, Texas

December 11–12, 2024

Welcome to Galveston

Texas A&M Transportation Institute 2024 PEPS Conference!



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For questions, please call 409.797.5136.

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. **Breakfast**
Exhibit Hall C

8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. **Opening Remarks**
Exhibit Hall C

Lucio Vasquez (PEPS Deputy Division Director)
Martin Rodin (PEPS Division Director)

Shining Star Award Presentation

8:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. **Break**

9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. **Keynote Speaker: Chet Garner**
Exhibit Hall C

9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **Break**



Keynote Speaker

***Chet Garner** is the creator, host, and executive producer of **The Daytripper**, a 12-time Emmy-award-winning Texas travel show airing on PBS stations across the country.*

Born in Comanche and raised in Port Neches, Texas, Chet's love for storytelling began at a young age around the Boy Scout campfire and toting around his grandfather's VHS video camera.

Chet earned a degree in radio-television-film from the University of Texas at Austin and went on to graduate first in his class from Baylor Law School. However, after practicing law for three years, he decided to follow his passions and simultaneously inspire folks to appreciate the beauty, history, and food of the Lone Star State. What followed was a crash course in travel, filmmaking, marketing, and doing whatever it takes to start a successful TV show.

When not traveling, Chet is at home in Georgetown, Texas, with his wife and five children (ages 13, 11, 8, 6, and 2)—although he's usually got them on the road, too.

CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

**Hall A1
Ethics Track**

Down the Rabbit Hole of Revolving Door Restrictions

MODERATOR:
Martha Juch

PRESENTER: Amy Owens

This presentation will walk through the three revolving door provisions and then jump down the rabbit hole of fact scenarios to help guide you through a world in which former TxDOT employees may or may not be prohibited from working for certain provider firms or on “particular matters.” Not understanding the basic rules or consequences could mean serious penalties...so don’t be late for this very important date.

Hall A2

HUB Subcontracting Plan (HSP) and DBE Contract Provisions

MODERATOR:
Amanda Flores

PRESENTERS: Billy Connolly and Patricia Litchfield

Presentation on how to complete the HUB Subcontracting Plan (HSP), including common errors. The DBE contract provisions will also be reviewed.

Hall A3

Best Practices for Interviews — Part 1

MODERATOR:
Shirin Helmi

PRESENTERS: Phil Howlett and Scott Nelson

Best practices for interview presentations. Includes set-up, facilitation, and presentation.

Hall A4

Panel: Debriefs — Leveraging Feedback to Improve Your Proposal

MODERATOR:
Joe Jancuska

PANELISTS: Chris Franco, Marc Sandhu, Donna Adams and Jennifer Nelson-Smith

Have you ever wondered how to make sure that a debrief is useful, consistent, and serves the same goal for all parties? Join us for a panel discussion between consultants and PEPS staff on debrief ground rules, ensuring consistency, and lessons learned from both sides.

**Floral AB
New Firms Track**

Preparing to Work with TxDOT

MODERATOR:
Yvonne Colmenero

PRESENTER: Natasha Tabatabaai

This presentation will include an introduction on licensing, registration, and precertification requirements for pursuing PEPS contracts with TxDOT.

10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. **Break**

CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS

11:00 a.m. – 11:45 p.m.

Hall A1 Ethics Track

Conflicts of Interest — How to Avoid It and What to do When you Get Stuck

MODERATOR:
Todd Speck

PRESENTER: Russell Ruplinger

This session will include a discussion of the process and past experiences regarding conflicts of interest.

Hall A2

Federal DBE Program Compliance

MODERATOR:
Billy Connolly

PRESENTER: Martha Arnold

This session will cover various aspects of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program, including federally funded projects with DBE goals, DBEs used to meet the goal, and what needs to happen when it is determined the committed DBE firm will no longer be used to meet the goal, e.g. Good Faith Efforts.

Hall A3

Best Practices for Interviews — Part 2

MODERATOR:
Shirin Helmi

PRESENTERS: Phil Howlett and Scott Nelson

Best practices for Interviews, including set-up, facilitation, and presentation. The focus of this session will be on the follow-up question and answer session.

Hall A4

Panel: Ways to Provide Great Service on Construction Engineering Inspection Contracts

MODERATOR:
Alan Gonzalez

PANELISTS: Paige LaBarr, K.D. Warach and Adam Galland

This session will cover lessons learned and best practices that CEI consultants can apply to provide great service on their future CEI contracts.

Floral AB New Firms Track

Precertification and Administrative Qualifications Overview

MODERATOR:
Gail Morea

PRESENTERS: Sierra Salinas, Roy Gonzales and Gabe Villanueva

Understanding the fundamentals of the Precertification and Administrative Qualifications processes.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11

11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. **Lunch**
Exhibit Hall C

CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS

1:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Hall A1
Ethics Track

Ethics Role in Risk Management

MODERATOR:
Janie Martinez

PRESENTERS: *Jeff Vinklerek, Robin Handel and Shane Wade*

This presentation will explore ethical responsibility in risk management and navigate TxDOT's errors and omissions (E&O) process, including a case study on how both parties effectively navigated the E&O process to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome for the taxpayer.

Hall A2

AJAR – Labor Hours Modeling: Transparency and Accountability in Contract Negotiations (duplicate presentation)

MODERATOR:
John Moos

PRESENTERS: *Michael Haithcock and Cliff Hallford*

The Level of Effort (LOE) tool is an ongoing database of previously negotiated contracts that provides historical data for similar type of work. This session will provide an update on the latest developments for this tool.

Hall A3

Panel: A Winning Strategy — How to Know a Project is Right for You

MODERATOR:
Dan Neal

PANELISTS: *Whit Friend, Jeff Wesanen and K.D. Warach*

A panel of consultants experienced in the Go/No-Go decision-making process will explain firsthand experiences and strategies on how to pursue and win work with TxDOT.

Hall A4

Panel: Successful Escalation in CEI Contracts

MODERATOR:
Alan Gonzalez

PANELISTS: *Mickey Marlow and Adam Galland*

This session will cover best practices to escalating concerns on CEI contracts to keep projects moving and avoid wasting time or money.

Floral AB
New Firms Track

Qualifications Based Proposals

MODERATOR:
Tiffany Nguyen

PRESENTER: *Mindy Sawyer*

Understanding the why behind developing qualifications-based proposals.

1:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. **Break**

CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS

2:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

**Hall A1
Ethics Track**

Ethics During the Procurement Process

MODERATOR:
Yassine El Idrissi

PRESENTERS: *Jaime Vela, Kendall Baker and Amy Owens*

This presentation will explore procurement ethics from the PEPS perspective and from an engineering consulting firm, including the procurement rules that prevent bias, how to use ethics to guide communication with the consultant community, establishing teaming arrangements with other engineering firms, communicating with TxDOT, understanding the procurement rules, and preparing proposal and interview content.

Hall A2

Top 5 Drone Myths and Misconceptions

MODERATOR:
Adrianna Perryman

PRESENTERS: *Michael Hill, James Dalton and Julian Magda*

This presentation will bring to light the top misconceptions around drone technology. We will dig into the latest drone technology available and how this tool creates a safer more cost effective way to do business.

Hall A3

**Fundamentals of Invoicing
(duplicate presentation)**

MODERATOR:
Tira Dobrozensky

PRESENTERS: *Nikki Cervantes and Priscilla Vasquez*

This presentation will include the beginning to end process of an invoice.

Hall A4

Construction Project Management/Best Practices in Public Involvement Activities

MODERATOR:
Amanda Flores

PRESENTERS: *Amy Redmond, Jennifer McPherson and Marco Galindo*

This session will cover lessons learned and best practices that CEI consultants can apply to provide great service on their future CEI contracts.

**Floral AB
New Firms Track**

Negotiation Basics

MODERATOR:
Gloria Hearn

PRESENTER: *Rebecca Lozoya*

This session will provide an overview of the annual rate negotiations process.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11

2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. **Break**

3:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. **Service Center Meet & Greet**
Exhibit Hall B

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. **Conference Reception**
Exhibit Hall B

Please join us for our Conference Reception



December 11 from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
in Exhibit Hall B

Hors d'oeuvres and non-alcoholic drinks provided

Cash bars also available

Networking, games, music, prizes, and more!

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. **Breakfast**
Exhibit Hall C

8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. **Things I Wish I Knew about Consulting**
Before I Left TxDOT
Exhibit Hall C

MODERATOR: *Martin Rodin*

PANELISTS: *Howard Holland, Randy Hopmann,*
Buddy Williams and Carlos Swonke

8:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. **Break**



CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS

9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

Hall A1 **AJAR — Labor Hours Modeling: Transparency and Accountability in Contract Negotiations (duplicate presentation)**

MODERATOR: Patricia Litchfield **PRESENTERS:** Michael Haithcock and Cliff Hallford

The Level of Effort (LOE) tool is an ongoing database of previously negotiated contracts that provides historical data for similar type of work. This session will provide an update on the latest developments for this tool.

Hall A2 **The Road to Timely Payments: Best Practices for Developing the Table of Deliverables and Timely Invoicing**

MODERATOR: Dan Neal **PRESENTERS:** Russell Ruplinger, Kari Ward and Manny Salas

A lessons-learned discussion on the process for developing the table of deliverables.

Hall A3 **Panel: Stay in the Game: Avoid Disqualification and Improve Submittals**

MODERATOR: Kori Rodriguez **PANELISTS:** Frederick Sunderman, Tracy Smith-Williams, Geetha Chandar, Krishna Peapully and Dan Rozycki

This panel will discuss their best practices for submitting quality proposals to help avoid disqualification.

Hall A4 **Legal Firm Name and Name Change**

MODERATOR: Elizabeth Grado **PRESENTERS:** Martha Juch and Mindy Sawyer

This presentation will provide an overview of the new PEPS webpage which provides the definition of a Provider Legal Firm Name and the process for a Provider to request a Name Change.

Floral AB **Fundamentals of Invoicing (duplicate presentation)**
New Firms Track

MODERATOR: Tira Dobrozensky **PRESENTERS:** Nikki Cervantes and Priscilla Vasquez

This presentation will include the beginning to end process of an invoice.

9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **Break**

CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Hall A1

Houston Comprehensive Engineering Consultant Contracts — Workflow and Tracking

MODERATOR:
John Mosaffa

PRESENTERS: *Andrea Ranft, Thuy Luong, David Balmos and LeAnne Napolillo*

This presentation will cover an overview of the Houston District workflow process to approve requests and how the district tracks the progress of comprehensive engineering consultant contracts.

Hall A2

Negotiation Center Updates

MODERATOR:
Shana Thomas

PRESENTER: *Rebecca Lozoya*

This session will cover the latest updates in the annual rate negotiations process.

Hall A3

PS-CAMS Database Overview

MODERATOR:
Adrianna Perryman

PRESENTER: *Gunalini Rajkumar*

This session will go over the basics of the PS-CAMS database for internal and external users and cover the most frequently asked questions.

Hall A4

Work Authorization Project Management

MODERATOR:
Esther Cisneros

PRESENTER: *Tamika Griffin*

This presentation will cover aspects of work authorization processing and management, including requesting, assigning, developing, managing, invoicing, provider evaluations, and closeouts.

Floral AB New Firms Track

Staying Out of the Rejection Lane

MODERATOR:
Steven Ruge

PRESENTER: *Anitra Lewis*

How to create the PEPS invoicing spreadsheet and its accommodating documents. This session is for new consultants working with PEPS with a perspective from a consultant view.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12

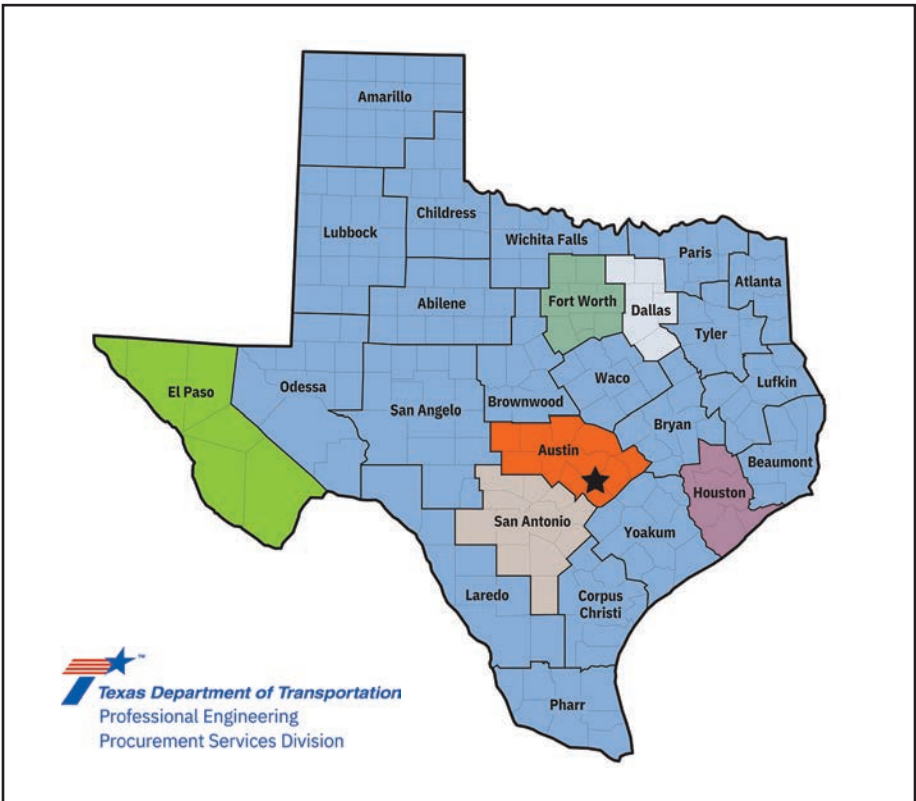
10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. **Break**

11:00 a.m – 11:30 a.m. **Innovations in PEPS
Exhibit Hall C**

PRESENTERS: *Martin Rodin and Dan Neal*

11:30 a.m. – Noon **Break**

Noon – 1:30 p.m. **Lunch and Closing
Exhibit Hall C**



CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Adam Galland

Adam has worked for TxDOT for over 20 years and has been the Director of Construction for the Houston District since October 2021. Adam oversees over 275 active construction projects with a combined contract value of \$6.6 billion and manages the Houston District CEI budget. He previously served as the TxDOT Area Engineer for Montgomery County and has worked in various roles throughout the Houston District including Assistant Area Engineer for the North Harris Area Office. Adam graduated from LSU in December 2002 with a degree in Biological Engineering. In December 2013, he completed his MBA from the University of Houston with the support of TxDOT's tuition assistance program. Adam's hometown is New Orleans, Louisiana, where his parents reside. He is married to Melody Galland, Director of Maintenance for the TxDOT Houston District. Together they have four children: Nikolas, Angelina, Adrian, and Sebastian.

Adrianna Perryman

Adrianna began her TxDOT career in 2015 as a contract employee on a temporary assignment. She was hired later in the year as a Contract Specialist with the PEPS San Antonio Service Center where she began executing contracts and work authorizations. In 2019, she helped establish the PEPS Invoice Service Center where she processed a high volume of invoices for districts and divisions. She is currently a Con-

tract Specialist with the PEPS Austin Service Center and a graduate of the 2023 PEPS Leadership Enrichment and Development Program.

Alan Gonzalez

Alan has worked for TxDOT where he began his career as an Engineering Assistant in El Paso's West Area Construction Office over 10 years ago. Under TxDOT's career development program, Alan was able to gain Project Management experience in El Paso's Central Design Office working on in-house and consultant management projects. Currently, he procures engineering, architectural, and surveying professional services transportation contracts in the PEPS Division and serving the El Paso District. Alan earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas at El Paso.

Amanda Flores

Amanda is a Contract Specialist for the San Antonio PEPS Service Center. She processes and reviews consultant selection documentation, contracts and related documents from procurement through execution. She also coordinates with the San Antonio District to process Supplemental Agreements, Work Authorizations, and Supplemental Work Authorizations and project closeouts. Amanda has been with TxDOT for a total of nine years and has worked with the PEPS Division for two years. Amanda earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance

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from the University of Texas Pan American in Edinburg, Texas.

Amy Kovar Owens

Amy, current Senior General Counsel, has been with the TxDOT General Counsel Division since 2022. She primarily supports the Human Resources, Compliance, and PEPS Divisions at TxDOT. She provides guidance to Districts and Divisions on employment issues, including disciplinary issues; compliance and ethics issues, including assistance in the Sanctions process for entities doing business with TxDOT; and conflict of interest and revolving door issues. Prior to joining TxDOT, she was an Assistant Attorney General in the Transportation Division at the Texas Office of the Attorney General. During her 15 years at the Transportation Division she primarily represented TxDOT in litigation matters all over the State related to employment, eminent domain, contracts, the APA, and the UDJA. She attended the University of Texas for her undergraduate degree and South Texas College of Law for her J.D.

Amy Redmond

For more than 20 years, Amy Redmond has championed public engagement and outreach across the state of Texas. As a Public Involvement Planner with TxDOT, she has spearheaded strategic public involvement initiatives for districts, on statewide corridors, and on major programs and plans like the Statewide Long Range Planning Program, Unified Transportation Plan, and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. She excels at fostering meaningful connections, managing diverse teams, and ensuring compliance with NEPA, FHWA, and TAC regulations. She's known for her expertise in virtual engagement and collaboration, providing leadership in the move to a hybrid approach to maximize public participation, training staff through administering the Effective Public Involvement training series, and serving as a founding committee member of the TxDOT Public Involvement Community of Practice.

Anitra Lewis

Anitra works for American Structurepoint, Inc. She is a financial expert with 37 years of experience and is a continuous learner who dives into the why to empower others and drive success.

B. Andrea Ranft

Andrea is the Section Director in the Project and Portfolio Management section of the Transportation Programs Division. She earned a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Texas A&M University and an MBA from the University of Houston. She has been with TxDOT for 15 years and in the industry for over 25 years.

Billy Connolly

Billy Connolly is a management analyst on the PEPS Center of Excellence team. He assists with the development, maintenance, and improvement of systems and tools supporting the PEPS program. He is also the PEPS HUB and DBE Lead. Prior to TxDOT, Billy worked for over 28 years at a financial services company implementing projects and programs. He holds a Master of Business Administration from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas. Billy enjoys traveling, and spending time with his two children and six grandchildren.

Buddy Williams

Buddy has over 35 years of transportation experience specializing in construction and materials. His distinguished career with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) includes time as Atlanta District Engineer, Director of the Materials and Tests Division (MTD), and Deputy Director of the Construction Division (CST). Before his time in Austin, Buddy spent the early part of his career as the Assistant Area Engineer in Texarkana, acting as project engineer on large complex construction projects. He also spent five years as the Director of Construction for TxDOT's Atlanta District. After retiring from TxDOT in 2022, Buddy came to WSB as Vice President of Strategy and supervises the Texarkana office and materials laboratory. A 1990 graduate of Texas A&M University, Buddy lives in Texarkana with his wife

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

of 27 years, Johna, and has one adult daughter, Ryann. He enjoys playing golf when he has the opportunity.

Carlos Swonke

Carlos has worked in the areas of environmental planning and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance for 37 years. He began his career at TxDOT in 1987 where he started as an engineering tech but soon transferred over the Environmental Section of the Design Division, a group that would later become the Environmental Affairs Division. After 11 years with TxDOT, Carlos moved to the private sector as a consultant where he managed a variety of environmental planning projects for a wide variety of clients. In 2012, Carlos returned to TxDOT as the Director of the Environmental Affairs Division. He retired from TxDOT in 2021 and has been at HNTB for the past three years.

Christopher Franco

Chris works for the PEPS Division in the Dallas Service Center as the Lead Engineer. Chris helps lead a team of procurement engineers and contract specialists to procure, negotiate, and execute contracts in support of the Dallas District. Before coming to PEPS, he held various roles in both design and construction with the Dallas District. He has worked for TxDOT for 16 1/2 years and holds a B.S. in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas at El Paso.

Cliff Hallford

Cliff is a Portfolio Project Manager for the PEPS Negotiations Center. His primary responsibility is to negotiate rates with consultants for labor, unit costs, and other direct expenses. He has been with TxDOT for over 30 years. Most of this time was spent in Construction and TP&D. Cliff earned a Bachelor of Business Administration with a minor in management.

Dan Rozycki

Dan Rozycki is the President and Founder of The Transtec Group. Transtec is a pavement engineering specialty firm based in Austin. Dan received his Civil Engineering degree at The University of Texas at Austin, worked a few jobs in transportation and construction, then co-founded The Transtec Group in 2001. Transtec provides pavement design, engineering, testing, and research for state DOTs, airfields, seaports, industrial pavements, test tracks and Formula 1 racetracks, with total construction values over \$65B. For TxDOT, Transtec has delivered pavement design, engineering, and testing in most Districts; has completed over a dozen DB/P3 projects in Texas; and has come in first place in all four TxDOT PEPS Pavement RFPs.

Danny (Dan) Neal

Dan is the Section Director of the Center of Excellence within the PEPS Division. He is responsible for the development, implementation, and improvement of the PEPS program for qualifications-based engineering, surveying, and architecture contracts. Dan has been with the department for 22 years. He previously worked for TxDOT's Environmental Affairs Division and the Texas Water Commission and its successor agencies. Dan holds a BS in petroleum engineering from the University of Texas at Austin.

David Balmos

David Balmos is a civil engineer with nearly three decades of experience in infrastructure development. A graduate of Texas A&M University in 1995 with a degree in civil engineering, David has built a career specializing in transportation projects across Texas. As Vice President at WSB, a nationally recognized consulting and design firm, he is based in Houston, where he leads large-scale transportation initiatives aimed at improving connectivity and mobility throughout the state. David has served as PM on over 15 IDC's for TxDOT for rural, urban, and metro Districts across the State.

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Donna Adams

Donna has spent more than 23 years studying TxDOT, keeping track (some-what) of new and improved processes and the growing pre-certification list, squeezing content into the old character-controlled forms, working with teams on strategy and positioning to stockpile insight in anticipation of content paragraphs and “the ask” (no questions, just “asks”), reading and revising proposals late into the night and into the early morning hours, coaching teams for interviews through long days, agonizing over losses (more than enough), exhilarating over wins (not nearly often enough), and waking up each day to do it all over again. All because she loves being a Texan, loves that TxDOT is her DOT, and mentions the great things TxDOT is doing at every possible opportunity in conversations with people who don’t live in the best state in the union. Oh, and she has seven smart, gorgeous grandkids ... see her after the session for photos.

Elizabeth Grado

Elizabeth joined TxDOT’s PEPS Division in December 2023 working in the Invoice Center before joining the El Paso Service Center in January 2024. Elizabeth is celebrating her 2nd anniversary with TxDOT this month! She previously worked as a budget analyst to expand her skills in commercial development, became a real estate agent, assisted in construction development, and undertook her entrepreneurial family business. Elizabeth earned a Master of Business Administration with a concentration in accounting and desires to seek her doctoral in the future to better serve the great state of Texas!

Esther Cisneros

Esther works in the PEPS Division, El Paso Service Center, as a Contract Administrator. She has worked for TxDOT for 8 Years and provides Procurement Support and Contract Administration Support to the El Paso District by reviewing, developing, and processing Work Authorizations, Supplemental Work Authorizations, Supplemental Agreements, and Proposal Screening. Esther also leads a team of Contract Specialists by providing training and development of Standard Operating Procedures for the El Paso Service Center. She also manages El Paso’s Internal Request account and oversees the administration of complex agreements and contracts through Project Closeout.

Frederick Sunderman

Frederick is a seasoned Professional Engineer specializing in field/materials testing and bridge engineering. He has served as Quality Control Manager for the Going-to-the-Sun Road bridge replacement in Glacier National Park, ensuring compliance with Design-Build specifications and DOT standards. Sunderman also acted as Lead Auditor for the SH 288 Toll Lanes project, overseeing quality assurance, auditing project management plans, and reviewing structural designs at key stages. With 10 years at TxDOT in fieldwork and bridge design/inspection for the Houston District, he is TxDOT precertified in multiple areas, including Construction Superintendent and Materials Engineering. He has taught as an adjunct professor at Prairie View A&M University, focusing on concrete, asphalt, and soil testing. Frederick is married to Kimberly and is a father of two teenagers, Courage and Chastity.

Gabe Villanueva

Gabe is a Project Management Specialist in the Business Operations Center of the PEPS Division. He reviews annual Administrative Qualifications submittals, and works on the development, implementation, and improvement of special projects. Gabe has been with the department for over 20 years. He previously worked for TxDOT’s El Paso District. He earned a Master of Business

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Administration from Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas.

Gail Eileen Morea

Gail has been with TxDOT for over 32 years and is the Contract Utilization Manager for the Center of Contract Utilization in the PEPS Division. Gail analyzes and tracks indefinite deliverable contracts with zero work authorizations and the remaining capacity of all active indefinite deliverable contracts by discipline. She performs QA/QC activities to include procurement planning reviews and serves as a liaison with the Districts, Divisions, the PEPS Service Center Managers and consultant community to maximize utilization of all indefinite deliverable professional and surveying contracts procured.

Geetha Chandar

Geetha is a transportation leader with over 25 years of experience in design and planning, including large-scale highway and bridge projects. She spent 20 years at TxDOT, with 13 years in the Bridge Division and 7 years in the PEPS Division. Before TxDOT, she worked on structural design for buildings in Austin. Currently, Geetha is the Texas Transportation Leader at Whitman, Requardt & Associates LLP, building the firm's presence in Texas through integrity, client commitment, and quality deliverables. A Leadership Texas graduate and panel member for NCHRP projects, Geetha is also active in professional development, serving on the WTS Austin chapter committee and as a founding member and co-chair of the Connecting TxDOT Women ERG. Geetha has co-authored papers on accelerated and prefabricated bridge design. Geetha holds a MS in civil engineering from the University of Texas at Austin. She is a licensed professional engineer with PMP certification.

Gunalini Rajkumar

Gunalini is a Performance Management Analyst in the PEPS Center of Excellence. She supports the PS-CAMS system for internal and external users. She designs, builds, and implements programs and/or

queries for spreadsheet or database software to create reports and import/Hallrt data and ad hoc reports in response to customer inquiries. Writes documentation to support the System. Gunalini earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from UT Austin.

Howard Holland

Howard is a graduate of TAMU with a degree in Agricultural Engineering. His first job out of college was with the USDA working in Texas and Colorado for irrigation and soil conservation projects. Howard was a part owner in an engineering company performing land development from 1984 to 1990, and he started with TxDOT in 1990. He began in the Bridge Division performing underwater, fracture critical and off system inspections, and was the Maintenance division director for TxDOT until his retirement in August 2014. Soon after retirement, Howard joined Raba Kistner and started their CEI practice where he has remained as the Texas CEI practice lead.

Jaime A. Vela, Jr.

Jaime has over 26 years of experience, 7 of these years in consulting. In 2005, Jaime joined TxDOT in the Laredo District, was quickly promoted into the South Region where he was instrumental in the development of TxDOT's 4-year project development plan, and helped with the prop 12 program. He was later named the PEPS Central Service Center Manager, supporting 19 rural and urban districts and about 14 divisions with professional services contracts. Although his service center went through some restructuring, Jaime now continues to support all 19 urban and rural districts under the Central Service Center. Under Jaime's direction, his service center has overseen approximately \$6.37 billion in procurements for about 1,285 contracts in the last 10 years. His hobbies include spending time with family, traveling, and raising Charolaise cattle. He has a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Texas A&M University in College Station.

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James Dalton

James is a Photogrammetry Specialist with the TxDOT Design Division in the Remote Sensing Services Section. They graduated from Texas A&M University with a B.S. in Geography, a minor in Geoinformatics and a member of the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets Squadrons 5 and 8. They started in mapping in 2005 at Tobin International in San Antonio, Texas. In 2010, they moved to TxDOT into the Photogrammetry Branch in the Technology Services Division. While at TxDOT, they continued working in photogrammetry and two years ago became a TxDOT UAS pilot. In their free time, they enjoy video games, board games, target shooting, running, and biking.

Janie Martinez

Janie is a Contract Administrator for the Central Service Center with experience in both procurement and document processing. She coordinates with the Corpus Christi and Yoakum Districts to process Supplemental Agreements, Work Authorizations, and Supplemental Work Authorizations, as well as Fiscal Management Oversight and is a Lead to a Contract Specialist. Janie provides training to her districts and has been with TxDOT/PEPS for a total of 9 ½ years.

Jeffery Vinklarek

Jeff started his career at TxDOT in 1998. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from Texas A&M University and received his engineering license in 2006. He later served as the Maintenance Engineer for the district. Jeff was the Director of Operations for the Yoakum District from 2013 through 2015 where he handled operations for the district. In 2016, he was selected as the Director of Transportation Planning and Development for the Yoakum District. In this role, he helped deliver some of the largest projects in the Yoakum District. In September of 2024, he was named Yoakum's new district engineer. Jeff is married to his wife Candace and has four wild daughters: Ainsley, Kinsley, Harper, and Lily.

Jeff Wesanen

Jeff is a Principal and Texas Business Center Practice Leader at Stantec. He has 20 years of experience managing complex transportation projects for state, county, and municipal clients across various transportation disciplines. Jeff is skilled at working with clients, engaging with the public, and leading design teams to improve daily commutes. As a transportation engineer, Jeff takes pride in seeing his designs come to life and positively impact driver safety, demonstrating his unwavering commitment to excellence and professional integrity. Jeff has been the Engineer of Record on numerous projects for TxDOT, including major intersections, widenings, and new location projects. One of his most rewarding projects involved widening SH 121 from Collin County Outer Loop to CR 635, which greatly improved safety and reduced congestion in the rapidly growing area of Collin County, Texas.

Jennifer McPherson

Jennifer is a seasoned professional with over 27 years of experience in the engineering and transportation infrastructure sectors. She began her career in marketing for engineering companies where she was responsible for translating complex technical language into clear, accessible communication that resonated with non-engineers. This skill set has been invaluable in her current role as President of Chickenango Marketing Solutions, a firm specializing in public engagement for transportation infrastructure projects. Jennifer has a deep understanding of how to communicate effectively with diverse stakeholders, ensuring that public input is integrated into project planning and design. Her extensive experience includes working with state departments of transportation, local governments, and community members to foster meaningful dialogue around critical transportation initiatives. Jennifer's expertise in public involvement, government relations, and strategic communications makes her a sought-after speaker on the topic of public engagement in the transportation infrastructure space.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Jennifer Nelson-Smith

Jennifer has worked at IEA Inc. for over 13 years. She has served many roles supporting IEA's development and growth from 20 employees in 2011 to 160+ in 2024. Jennifer is currently the Director of Marketing and an IEA Shareholder. She leads a team of marketing professionals and engineers in the development of proposal and interview content while responding to RFQs and Proposals. She also works with the leadership team to develop long and short-term strategies for continued company success. Jennifer's specialty is the writing and layout of proposals to engage her audience through strategic storytelling. She has honed her craft through client debriefs, mentor-protégé agreements, collaborations with teaming partners, and networking with TxDOT staff and other governmental entities and consultants. Jennifer earned a bachelor's degree in communications-journalism from Mississippi State University.

John Moos

John is a year-round intern for the PEPS Division in the Fort Worth District where he works in support of contract management. He previously worked in the Dallas District Bridge Division and is pursuing a Business Management degree at Tarleton State University.

John Mosaffa

John works for the PEPS Division in the Houston Service Center as a Procurement Engineer. He has worked for TxDOT for 18+ years. His experience ranges from construction, Material Testing, Roadway Design, Traffic Engineering Design, Plan review, and Professional Engineering Procurement Services (PEPS). John facilitates a wide range of professional services contracts including GEC, PS&E, CEI, Ferry Design, and Material Testing. Some of the notable projects include NHHIP, Inner Katy Corridor, and Grand Parkway.

Joseph (Joe) Jancuska

Joe is the PEPS Dallas Service Center Manager. He supports the contracting needs of the Dallas District, including getting contracts executed and processing work authorizations and supplemental agreements for those contracts. Joe earned his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from UT-Arlington. He has worked for the department for 36 years, having spent 25+ years working in the Dallas District's Roadway Design Section on many great projects.

Julian Magda

Julian Magda is a Photogrammetry Specialist III and is part of the Remote Sensing team with TxDOT in the Design Division. He trained as a Rodman for Andregg Surveys in Auburn California in the early nineties and transitioned into mapping working for Airmaps USA in 1998. He started working for Radman Aerial Surveys in 1999 and worked on mapping projects such as the Golden Gate Bridge, The Bay Bridge, Downtown San Francisco and did extensive mapping for Caltrans working in the private sector. He took surveying and GIS classes in 2014-2016 at American River College and in 2017 took over as manager for the Mapping department for Radman Aerial. He moved to Texas in 2022 to work at TxDOT in the Photogrammetry Department and has since acquired his UAV pilots license and is currently a TxDOT UAV pilot. He enjoys sketching wildlife and plans to get back into doing watercolors.

Julie Rook

Julie is a negotiator for the PEPS Negotiation Center. She has been with TxDOT for over 25 years. Previously, Julie worked for the Paris District in Design and Development and Procurement Planning. Julie graduated from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Engineering but sat for her PE license in Civil Engineering.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Kari Ward

Kari is the Texas Transportation Operations Leader. With an impressive track record of over 24 years in project management, Kari brings a wealth of expertise to her role, instilling confidence in her ability to lead a dynamic team of over 70 professionals dedicated to advancing Texas' infrastructure. During her 16-year tenure at Stantec, Kari has successfully delivered a diverse portfolio of projects for municipalities and counties across the United States, ranging from pedestrian pathways to intricate roadway and bridge designs. Kari's unwavering dedication lies in conceptualizing and implementing efficient, secure, and sustainable transportation solutions. Notably, she holds a Project Management Professional (PMP) certification and is a Registered Professional Engineer in Texas, Florida, and Georgia.

K.D. Warach

K.D. has almost 30 years of experience in construction management and project management of transportation projects. He has managed construction of some of the largest construction projects in the state of Texas for TxDOT and other agencies, including the LBJ Express in Dallas and SH 288 Toll Lanes in Houston. Prior to his work in Texas, he served in the public sector as Structures Resident Engineer for California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and as Resident Engineer for Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT). K.D. is a licensed professional engineer (PE) in six states: Texas, California, Nevada, Arizona, Washington, and North Carolina. He has extensive knowledge of all aspects of construction administration and management, including design-build, independent engineering (IE), audits, quality assurance and acceptance, partnering, materials testing, change orders, CPM schedule review and claims analysis.

Kendall Baker

Kendall started her career at the Texas Department of Transportation and served in various project development, delivery, and procurement roles throughout her 18-year tenure with the agency.

She ended her TxDOT tenure as the Assistant Service Center Manager for the TxDOT PEPS Rural Service Center. She served 11 rural districts throughout Texas for procurement and consultant contracting needs. She helped lead the team of procurement engineers and contract specialists in the center and oversaw its consultant communications. Since joining STV in 2023, Kendall has been instrumental in STV's growth in Texas, meeting TxDOT's transportation and field suite of services. As the Business Development Leader, Kendall directly works with STV's technical and managerial leadership teams, assisting STV in achieving its goal of making communities better and corridors safer.

Kori Rodriguez

Kori began her TxDOT career in 1999. As an Engineering Assistant her rotations include lab, pavement design, district design, area office planning, design and construction in the Bryan, San Antonio & Austin Districts. In 2013, Kori was instrumental in establishing the Professional Engineering Procurement Services (PEPS) Division, serving as Interim Director for the Austin, San Antonio, and El Paso Service Centers remaining in the San Antonio SC until establishing the Service Center for Divisions in November 2016. As a Service Center Manager, she fosters relationships with District and Division personnel, TxDOT Administration, and the consultant community to develop and maintain a high-functioning Service Center. Kori graduated from Texas A&M University and is a licensed engineer. She is the proud mom of four teenagers: two of the canine variety along with two amazing kiddos who are the joy of her life — most of the time.

Krishna Peapully

Krishna is the Executive Vice President and Transportation Planning & Design Director for Consor's Central Region, bringing 30 years of experience in the design and delivery of rural and urban projects and overseeing initiatives from preliminary engineering to construction phase services. Krishna has managed diverse design programs, ensuring high-quality deliverables while meeting

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strict timelines. His expertise includes managing concurrent work assignments, developing best practices, and implementing innovations. Krishna has deep expertise in the TxDOT procurement process and routinely mentors DBE/HUB and new firms navigating it. A Texas A&M University graduate with a MSCE, Krishna began his career at TxDOT and transitioned to consulting. Since joining Consor in 2022, he has led a team of over 200 professionals, fostering a culture of mentorship and empowerment. Krishna is dedicated to supporting the next generation of professionals.

Krista Moreira

Krista is a Procurement Engineer with the PEPS Service Center for Divisions. She leads Consultant Selection Teams to select the most qualified consultant teams for their engineering, survey, and architecture services contracts. She also assists customers with planning their procurements from initial request through preparing for kickoff. She has been with TxDOT since 2020, when she started working in the Wichita Falls District. Krista earned a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Midwestern State University and a Master's in Engineering for Transportation Professionals from Texas A&M. She also serves as co-chair of the Connecting TxDOT Women Leadership and Skills Development Subcommittee.

LeAnne Napolillo

LeAnne, a Vice President with HNTB-Houston, where she has more than 30 years' experience managing complex transportation projects from planning through design to construction. She served as Program Manager for the \$2.5B US 290 Program in Houston, and currently serves as the Project Manager for HNTB's Comprehensive Engineering Consultant (CEC) contract for TxDOT-Houston. Under the CEC, she has led a variety of assignments, ranging from development of the Houston District Sharepoint site for the CEC task assignment request approval process and contract status dashboard; ORD training for the Houston District; and pump

station physical modeling. Napolillo earned a Bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Kansas State University and a Master of Industrial Engineering from the University of Houston. She has served in multiple leadership positions within the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), including ASCE-Houston and Texas Section, and is currently serving on the ASCE national board of direction.

Lucio Vasquez

Lucio is the Deputy Director for the PEPS Division. A 27-year veteran of TxDOT, he is responsible for assisting the division director in overseeing the planning and operations of the PEPS Division. Lucio holds a master's degree in engineering from The University of Texas at Austin and a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Texas A&M University in Kingsville.

Manuel (Manny) Alfredo Salas

Manny joined the PEPS Center of Excellence (COE) in 2023. He coordinates with other PEPS COE staff in the development, maintenance, and improvement of systems and tools supporting the PEPS program and routine processes. Manny was previously a procurement engineer in the PEPS El Paso Service Center for four years. He earned a B.S. in Civil Engineering from UTEP in 2008 and an M.S. in Civil Engineering from UTEP 2016.

Marc Sandhu

Marc is the President & CEO of ARS Engineers, Inc., a civil engineering, land surveying, and utilities firm headquartered in DFW. He has been passionately pursuing TxDOT work for over 15 years. Under his leadership, ARS has won 12 prime TxDOT indefinite delivery contracts, resulting in over 60 prime TxDOT Work Authorizations. Marc has played a crucial role in expanding ARS's capabilities and staff size while always preserving a strong "small firm" culture. Since joining ARS in 2009, he has worked on a broad range of project types, including roadway design, water and wastewater utility design, aviation design, site development, utility coordination, and

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Subsurface Utility Engineering (SUE). Marc earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering (with business minor) from Texas A&M University in College Station.

Marco Galindo

A graduate of the University of Texas at San Antonio, Marco began his career with TxDOT in 2008 at the Bexar Metro Area Office. Marco gained valuable experience through various rotations within the SAT District including Advanced Planning, Central Design, and the Lab. He obtained his Professional Engineer's license in 2013 and in 2015, he returned to the Bexar Metro Area Office as Construction Engineer. In 2018, he took the position of Assistant Area Engineer, gaining more construction and maintenance experience. In December of 2022, Marco became the Alternative Project Delivery Supervisor for the San Antonio District. In his role, Marco leads the management of the I-35 NEX Program, valued at over \$3 billion dollars. He brings his knowledge and experience of the local area and the industry to this great program.

Martha Ferrero Juch

Martha is the PEPS Plan Administrator in the Center of Excellence in the PEPS division. She holds a B.S. and M.E. in Civil Engineering from Texas A&M University, and an M.S. in Environmental Engineering from Rice University. Martha has experience in both the public and private sector, serving two years as the Executive Director for the Texas Section of ASCE and working in water resources engineering and planning for the Harris County Flood Control District, several consulting firms, and her own firm before joining TxDOT in 2015. Since joining PEPS, Martha has provided support to the Section Director and managed the COE Projects Portfolio and Projected Contracts Portfolio. She leads the division's manual development and the annual procurement planning process and is a liaison with EUNA Solutions (Bonfire), FHWA, and TxDOT Divisions. Martha also teaches several recurring PEPS classes and numerous workshops throughout the year.

Martin Rodin

Martin is the PEPS Division Director. He oversees the procurement of over \$2 billion annually in professional services contracts for engineering, architectural, and surveying needs statewide. He works with all 25 TxDOT districts and with 16 of the TxDOT divisions to translate their needs into professional services contracts, while also overseeing the management of TxDOT's annual consultant contracts budget and serving as the department's liaison with the ACEC. Martin holds an MBA from West Texas A&M University and a B.S. in civil engineering from Texas Tech University.

Michael A. Haithcock

Michael is the Director of TP&D in the Abilene District (December, 2014 to present), and he manages Planning and Programming, Preconstruction, Plan Development, and Project Management in 13 West Texas counties including the Abilene MPO. He oversees Advanced Transportation Planning including the 4-year STIP and 10-year UTP. Michael is the mentor for the Young Professionals Group and is working with PEPS on AJAR the Labor Hour Level of Effort tool. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering Technology from Kennesaw State University and a Master's in Business Administration from Georgia State University. He likes jogging, playing piano, and taking long walks on the weekends with his wife Lorraine.

Michael Hill

Considered one of the world's leading subject matter experts (SME) on drone technology, Michael serves as the principal strategist for Uncrewed Aerospace. He counsels organizations through the challenges of bringing UAV drone solutions into their respective industries that range from equipment and software procurement to pilot vetting and recruiting, regulatory support, and system integrations. As a drone industry advocate, he served as chairperson for the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) UAS Taskforce, Legislative & Policy Committee, where he was appointed to both the Texas HB2340- Public Safety UAS and

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the Texas SB763- AAM Committees. This allowed him to educate politicians, government officials, and large businesses on AAM policies while reforming UAV regulations in Texas. As a 2nd Lieutenant and Director of Unmanned Operations (DOU) for the Texas Wing of the Civil Air Patrol, Michael became a certified Search and Rescue Drone Pilot covering FEMA disaster missions while training and mentoring his peers to become certified remote pilots.

Mickey Marlow

Mickey began his career in transportation nearly forty years ago as Construction Superintendent and Chief Inspector with the Texas Department of Transportation. Over his 27 years with TxDOT, Mickey worked his way through the ranks with positions in inspection, roadway and bridge design, plan review, project management and finally managing a regional procurement service center for eight TxDOT districts. For the last decade, Mickey has worked for private consultancies managing growth strategies, business development, and operations in the Texas transportation sector.

Mindy Sawyer

Mindy is a Transportation Engineer in the Center of Excellence in the PEPS Division. Mindy joined TxDOT in May of 2013. She has over 14 years of industry experience in the public and private sectors. She provides support in the procurement and management of engineering, architectural, and surveying contracts, along with maximizing resources to enhance and streamline service capabilities. Mindy is a licensed Professional Engineer and holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering along with a separate Bachelor of Science Degree in Architecture, both from Texas Tech University.

Natashia Tabatabaai

Natashia is the PEPS Fort Worth Service Center Director. She provides procurement services, quality assurance, and customer service to meet the Fort Worth District's contracting needs. Natashia has been with the department



for over thirteen years. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Civil and Environmental Engineering with a minor in Mathematics from the University of Texas at Arlington.

Nikki Cervantes

Nikki is a Lead Contract Administrator for the PEPS Invoice Center. She has worked with TxDOT for 8 1/2 years. She began her career with the PEPS Central Service Center then was promoted to the PEPS Invoice Center as a Lead, where she was able to assist with the establishment of the Invoice Center. Nikki trains, audits, assigns, and delegates tasks to both internal and external clients for the PEPS Division. She actively participates in initiatives to streamline the invoicing processes. She has helped oversee the processing of 22,000 invoices for FY24 with a 95% on-time payment metric.

Paige LaBarr

Paige has 11 years of experience as an engineering and construction professional. She started her career in oil and gas, serving as a Project Engineer on LNG terminals, nuclear power plants, and oil refineries. After joining RS&H in 2017, she has worked primarily for the TxDOT Houston District as Resident Engineer and Project Manager to deliver \$850 million in complex construction along the IH-45 Gulf Freeway (four segments) corridor and on the SH 146 Kemah Express Bridge project. She is hyper-focused on risk mitigation, quality control, and safety, which has helped

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her develop trusted relationships with clients, contractors, and local stakeholders. She has a proven track record of resolving project issues by finding solutions that are fair and advance the project. Paige has contributed to resolution to hundreds of utility conflicts and mitigated impacts related to plan errors, unacquired ROW, USACE permitting challenges, and differing site conditions.

Patricia Litchfield

Patricia Litchfield is a Contract Administrator for the PEPS Division, supporting the Austin District. In April of 2015, Patricia began her career with TxDOT as a Special Projects Coordinator with the Strategic Projects Division, which later became the Project Finance, Debt and Strategic Contracts Division. In April of 2017, she joined the newly formed PEPS Service Center for Divisions as a Special Projects Coordinator II, then taking on the role of a Contract Specialist. In October of 2022, she joined the PEPS Austin Service Center. Patricia is a graduate from the University of Texas at San Antonio with a Bachelor of Science in Biology, and completed several graduate course hours in Education, Curriculum, and Instruction.

Philip Howlett

Phil is a Lead PEPS Engineer with the PEPS division in the San Antonio Service Center. He has overseen and coordinated the procurement of numerous multi-million-dollar state and federally funded Indefinite Deliverable and Specific Deliverable contracts, enabling the department's district and divisions to obtain the most qualified consultants to deliver their specific project development needs. Phil has over 23 years of service with TxDOT. He received his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Texas San Antonio.

Priscilla Vasquez

Priscilla is a Contract Administrator for the PEPS Invoice Center. Priscilla helped to establish the PEPS Invoicing Center, which processes over 22,000 invoices annually. Priscilla has been with TxDOT for 10 years and provides lead-

ership, training, and resources to others in the Invoice Center. She is focused on providing excellent customer service to the private sector and all TxDOT Districts and Divisions. Priscilla holds a bachelor's degree in science from the University of Texas-Pan American.

Randy Hopmann

Randy retired from TxDOT Administration in 2019 as Director of District Operations after a 35-year career with the department where he provided oversight and support for all 25 districts across Texas. He led numerous programs including the Texas Clear Lanes congestion relief initiative, TxDOT's Energy Sector program, Proposition 12 project selection and development process, the development of Texas' Connectivity Corridors, Accelerated Construction Initiatives, and Mission Zero employee safety program. Randy provided oversight for the statewide letting program valued at \$6.5 billion in 2019. Randy joined Consor Engineers in 2022 as Senior Vice President/Strategic Growth Lead, Texas Transportation, lending his knowledge and experience of transportation projects and programs to help deliver projects to clients across Texas.

Rebecca Lozoya

Rebecca has more than 22 years of experience working with TxDOT. She was born and raised in El Paso where she graduated in 2002 from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. She then began her well-rounded career with TxDOT. Rebecca has been a driving force in many keystone projects of the El Paso District and has worked in many influential roles within the El Paso District and PEPS Division in areas of Advance Transportation Planning (ATP), Advance Project Development (APD), Design, Construction, program and portfolio management, contract procurements, and contract negotiations. She is now the PEPS Negotiations Center Manager where she is responsible for administering the Annual Rate Negotiation Program with TxDOT's consultant partners for all procurements

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statewide. Outside of work, Rebecca enjoys time with her two teenagers, Michael and Ariana.

Robin Handel

Since joining STV in 1995, Robin has been instrumental in building the firm's transportation suite of services. As the transportation market sector leader, Robin works directly with STV's management team and is responsible for growth across our regional offices. He works closely with TxDOT, Regional Mobility Authorities, Tollway Authorities, and local municipalities and counties to improve infrastructure in our communities. He enjoys sharing his knowledge by mentoring staff to develop innovative solutions for clients' complex transportation needs. Robin has served clients in many roles, including Project Principal and Senior Project Manager. Throughout his 29 years of design and project management experience, Robin has managed and led design teams on various projects ranging from urban and rural roadways to complex, multilevel interchanges. Robin's attention to detail and drive to exceed client expectations have allowed him to help lead the STV team to become one of the premier transportation firms in the region.

Roy Gonzales

Roy is the PEPS Business Operations Center Manager. He oversees the operations of the PEPS Division to include resource management of staffing, operating and consultant contract budgets, supply chain goods, and administrative qualifications. He has been with the department for 11 years. Roy earned his MBA in management information systems and his MSPM in project management from St. Edward's University.

Russell Ruplinger

Russell is a Principal in Stantec's transportation group with 20 years of experience in the infrastructure industry. Originally from outside Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Russell has worked all over the nation for a wide variety of clients including TxDOT, Illinois Tollway, California High Speed Rail, Sempra Utilities

and Chick-Fil-A. He has helped deliver approximately \$30B worth of projects, working in design, construction, controls, and risk management capacities. Russell currently serves as the Texas Transportation Strategic Development Lead where he is working on developing Stantec's Ports, Aviation, Rail, Road, Transit and Bridge portfolio of transportation projects. His passion is building high performing teams and effectively delivering work through the enablement of technology.

Scott D. Nelson

Scott is the Advanced Planning Director for TxDOT San Antonio District, with over 15 years in public and private sectors. A dynamic leader in transportation, his team manages an \$8 billion project portfolio. Nelson was named a Young Leader to Follow in 2024 by the Institute of Transportation Engineers and the 2023 TexITE Younger Member of the Year. He holds degrees from Texas A&M University and lives in Terrell Hills, Texas, with his wife, Maria, and their two daughters.

Shana Thomas

Shana is the Controls Section Director in the PEPS Division with over 15 years of experience in the transportation industry. She is responsible for monitoring and tracking Audit/Management Action Plan (MAPs), performance metrics, and ensuring PEPS adherence to federal and state contracting and funding laws. Shana collaborates with others on continuous improvement initiatives and monitors procedures for proper compliance interpretation. Shana previously worked in the Transportation Planning and Programming Division. Shana holds her graduate and undergraduate degree in Civil Engineering. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her family and volunteering at many non-profit organizations.

R. Shane Wade

Shane is a catalyst for growth and operational change. He believes in investing in leaders who help others. He a

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Senior Vice President and the Regional Development Director for the Central United States Operations of STV Inc. He is a licensed professional engineer with a multi-disciplinary leadership approach to engineering business development and scalable growth through optimization and simplified solutions. Shane's experience with alternative delivery and program management, combined with a design and construction background, results in a practical leadership style. He has a reputation for delivering profitable, client focused results to complex origination and project problems through team-based solutions management, standardization, and process controls. He exists to help people work through change management and growing pains by removing obstacles and speeding up business to the next levels of personal leadership and team development.

Shirin Helmi

Shirin is a PEPS Lead Engineer in the San Antonio Service Center. She has been with TxDOT and PEPS for almost 9 years and has a BS in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin. Shirin performs procurement methodologies and practices; performs quality control of PEPS processes and contracts; develops contracting strategies; and directs procurements to satisfy state and federal legislative regulations. She oversees and coordinates projects and program activities, oversees, and manage contracts.

Sierra Salinas

Sierra is the Precertification Liaison for the TxDOT Professional Engineering Procurement Services (PEPS) Division at the Center of Excellence Section. As the Precertification Liaison, Sierra manages all precertifications and bridges the gap between consulting firms and TxDOT's expert technical reviewers. She also manages the CCIS Salesforce system to ensure proper function for both internal and external users. Before joining TxDOT in 2023, Sierra supported the Engineering and Land Surveying community working for the Texas Board of Professional



Engineers and Land Surveyors as a Licensing Specialist, while also participating in exam administration, outreach events, and Board meetings. Sierra supports the PEPS Center of Excellence by participating in outreach events and developing and presenting training material for end-users both internal and external to TxDOT.

Steven Rugge

Steven joined PEPS in August 2018 after over 2½ years with the Construction Division (CST). Prior to TxDOT, he worked for over 10½ years for NJDOT's Region South Construction Section as a project manager on construction and maintenance projects. Steven holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey.

Tamika Griffin

Tamika joined TxDOT in October 2000, starting her career in the Austin District as a training coordinator. She later transitioned to the Consultant Service Contract Office as a contract specialist. In 2012, she joined the Strategic Projects Division contract section, where she proactively deepened her knowledge and quickly rose to the become the division's Contract Manager, managing complex contracts valued at approximately \$626 million. In 2017, Tamika joined the PEPS Service Center for Divisions as the Contract Manager.

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Tamika supports the management of all TxDOT Divisions' professional services contracts, coordinating efforts across multiple PEPS Service Centers, and contributing to the Department's overarching goals and programs. Under her guidance, her team thrives, benefiting from her expertise and innovative approach to developing best management practices. Her career reflects a profound commitment to excellence and a continuous drive to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of contract administration within TxDOT.

Thuy Luong

Thuy has been with TxDOT for 26 years. During her career with TxDOT, she has developed extensive expertise in transportation engineering including project management, design, construction, and procurement process. As the Houston District Project Portfolio Manager, she assists the TP&D Director in managing a \$1.5 billion UTP. In her previous role, Thuy oversaw a \$10 million H&H consultant budget annually, ensuring contract compliance and providing essential training to the Houston District's H&H PMs. As a Continuous Improvement Project Manager with the PEPS Center of Excellence, she significantly contributed to the enhancement of PEPS processes, development of three PEPS manuals, and the training of over 300 TxDOT employees each year. Thuy earned her Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Central Florida in 1997 and, in 2008, she completed a Master of Science in Civil Engineering, specializing in Hydrology and Hydraulics from the University of Houston through TxDOT's full-time Master's Degree Program.

Tiffany Nguyen

Tiffany is a Contract Administrator for PEPS Houston Service Center. She has been working with the Division for 11 years. Her job duties entail providing advanced technical and administrative support to include reviewing, processing, assisting, and handling complaints, resolution of discrepancies, and problems regarding contracts. Tiffany is a Certified Texas Contract Manager.

She is also a lead worker by serving as a resource for complex questions. Tiffany graduated from the University of Houston with a Bachelor of Business Administration.

Tina G. Farias

Tina is the manager of the Support Services Center (SSC) in PEPS. SSC is composed of up to 18 contract workers who handle all time extensions, global agreements and compliance audits, among many other tasks, to assist the PEPS division. Her goals for SSC include providing the team with training on PEPS processes managed by SSC but also to provide a pool of trained and qualified contract specialists available for hiring to all of TxDOT. To date, Tina has had a hand in aiding 16 contractors in obtaining full time employment status with TxDOT! Tina is currently a senior at Texas A&M San Antonio, a 2023 PEPS Lead Alumni, and most recently completed WTS Signature Leadership Training in Arlington.

Tira Dobrozensky

Tira is the PEPS Invoice Center Section Director. She manages a group of 15 Invoice Specialist who process all invoices for Contracts and Work Authorizations managed by the PEPS Division and 2 Contract Administrators who assist with the daily functions of the PEPS Invoice Center. Additionally, her group addresses all payment inquiries, audits and monitors Prompt Payment Compliance. Tira has overseen the review of 22,000 invoices a year and has significantly reduced the amount of penalty interest TxDOT pays out. She is consistently working on streamlining the invoice review process. Recently she worked with a team to build and rollout the DocuSign program for invoice submittals, tracking and reviewing. Currently she is working on an AI initiative to cutdown the review time and billing accuracy. She provides continuous guidance and training to internal and external PEPS customers on invoicing and its processes. Tira has been with TxDOT for nine years.

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Todd Speck

Todd is a procurement engineer for PEPS Austin Service Center responsible for supporting the Austin District's procurement and contract needs. He has been with TxDOT for twelve years and was a consulting structural engineer for 20 years prior to the Department. He's designed millions of square feet of buildings, scores of bridges, and many other structures in Texas and across the US; including the Texas Rangers' Ballpark in Arlington and 40-story high-rises in downtown Dallas. Todd has been a guest lecturer for The University of Texas at Austin Civil Engineering graduate program. He has a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Michigan Technological University and a Master's from The University of Texas at Arlington.

Whit Friend

Whit currently serves as the Texas Road Group Leader for American Structurepoint, responsible for managing the staff in two offices and overseeing work for more than 30 clients across the state. As a licensed engineer with over 24 years of experience, Whit has served as project manager over a wide range of engineering work including highway, tollway, traffic, hydrologic and hydraulic, construction oversight, utility, and land development projects. Whit has worked in Houston, Dallas, and Austin areas providing services for projects ranging from multibillion-dollar design-build projects to locally funded development projects. Whit's experience includes advanced planning, schematic, PS&E, and design-build projects throughout the US and has served as an in-house extension of staff for state, city, and regional agencies.

Tracy Smith-Williams

Tracy Smith-Williams is a Pursuit Manager and Team Lead with more than eight years of marketing and business development experience at Lochner, focused on the Texas transportation market, including TxDOT. As a marketing leader, Tracy works with technical teams to manage capture planning and strategic marketing efforts throughout the state, in addition to

providing compliance oversight and quality management of pursuits and proposals. Tracy is an expert in TxDOT proposal response, providing internal and external trainings to enhance compliance processes and messaging. She is an active member of the SMPS organization and leads Lochner's participation in Texas diversity inclusion programs including TxDOT's DRIVE Program and the North Texas Tollway Authority's ROAD Program.

Yassine El Idrissi

Yassine El Idrissi joined the Business Operations Section of the PEPS Division in February 2024, where he assists with daily administrative tasks and collaborates on operational strategies to enhance efficiency and productivity. Previously, he worked in the TXDOT Contract Services Division, earning his Certified Texas Contract Manager Certificate (CTCM) and acquiring expertise in the contracting process. In 2019, Yassine transitioned to the Design Division as a Resource Support Specialist, where he provided administrative support and managed operations. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Professional Communication from the University of Rabat, Morocco, and an HR Management Certificate from the University of Texas at Austin. Yassine's career began at George Washington Academy in Morocco as a High School Teacher, Soccer Coach, and HR Administrator.

Yvonne Colmenero

Yvonne works in the PEPS Division in the El Paso Service Center. She procures engineering, architectural, and surveying professional contracts for TxDOT, having recently completed her first year at TxDOT. Prior to TxDOT, she worked in the private sector for about 10 yrs. Within those 10 yrs, she gained experience in designing, managing, and preparing PS&E packages for TxDOT and city projects. She has worked on roadway, drainage, traffic signals, bridge, utility, safety, and continuous illumination projects. Yvonne received her Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas at El Paso in 2014.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HOURS TRACKING LOG

2024 TxDOT Professional Engineering Procurement Services Conference

December 11-12, 2024 | Moody Gardens Hotel | Galveston, TX

NAME _____

DISTRICT/DIVISION/COMPANY _____

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2024		
✓	SESSION TOPIC	HOURS
	Down the Rabbit Hole of Revolving Door Restrictions	45 min
	HUB Subcontracting Plan (HSP) and DBE Contract Provisions	45 min
	Best Practices for Interviews – Part 1	45 min
	Debriefs – Leveraging Feedback to Improve Your Proposal	45 min
	Preparing to Work with TxDOT	45 min
	Conflicts of Interest – How to Avoid It and What to do When you Get Stuck	45 min
	Federal DBE Program Compliance	45 min
	Best Practices for Interviews – Part 2	45 min
	Ways to Provide Great Service on Construction Engineering Inspection Contracts	45 min
	Precertification & Administrative Qualifications Overview	45 min
	Ethics Role in Risk Management	45 min
	AJAR – Labor Hours Modeling: Transparency and Accountability in Contract Negotiations	45 min
	A Winning Strategy – How to Know a Project is Right for You	45 min
	Successful Escalation in CEI Contracts	45 min
	Qualifications Based Proposals	45 min
	Ethics During the Procurement Process	45 min
	Top 5 Drone Myths and Misconceptions	45 min
	Fundamentals of Invoicing	45 min
	Construction Project Management – Best Practices in Public Involvement Activities	45 min
	Negotiation Basics	45 min

Signature (Your signature certifies your attendance at the sessions indicated)
This PDH log is two-sided.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HOURS TRACKING LOG

2024 TxDOT Professional Engineering Procurement Services Conference

December 11-12, 2024 | Moody Gardens Hotel | Galveston, TX

NAME _____

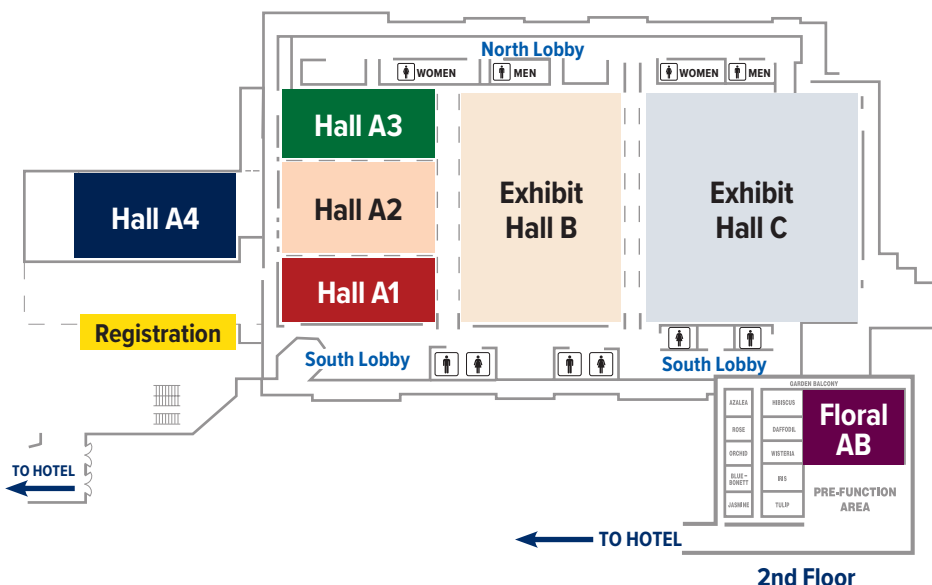
DISTRICT/DIVISION/COMPANY _____

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2024		
✓	SESSION TOPIC	HOURS
	AJAR – Labor Hours Modeling: Transparency and Accountability in Contract Negotiations	45 min
	The Road to Timely Payments: Best Practices for Developing the Table of Deliverables and Timely Invoicing	45 min
	Stay in the Game: Avoid Disqualification and Improve Submittal	45 min
	Legal Firm Name and Name Change	45 min
	Fundamentals of Invoicing	45 min
	Houston Comprehensive Engineering Consultant Contracts – Workflow and Tracking	45 min
	Negotiation Center Updates	45 min
	PS-CAMS Database Overview	45 min
	Work Authorization Project Management	45 min
	Staying Out of the Rejection Lane	45 min

Signature (Your signature certifies your attendance at the sessions indicated)

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MOODY GARDENS CONVENTION CENTER MAP



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SAVE  THE DATE

2025 PEPS Conference

December 9–10, 2025
Embassy Suites Dallas–Frisco
Hotel & Convention Center

