



News from the Florida Association of County Engineers & Road Superintendents

## FACERS Fall Meeting

FACERS first ever hybrid meeting held in Duval County, FL, was extremely successful thanks to ALL the hands that contributed in a very short period of time to make it happen. PDHs were offered for all courses during the two-day technical sessions while participants attended via online (via NACE's ZOOM account) and in person with proper social distancing. We have posted a ton of photos and information from the presenters on our Facebook page at [facebook.com/facers.net](https://facebook.com/facers.net). Thanks to all presenters, sponsors, and FACERS members who were able to be a part of this unique educational and networking event. Hope to see you all in Orlando (or online) in June 2021 for our Annual Meeting!!

Click below to view the Fall Meeting Daily Agenda's:

[Day 1 Agenda](#)

[Day 2 Agenda](#)



*Taken during a hybrid session at the 2020 FACERS Hybrid Fall Meeting.*



*Thank you Brian Singleton (City of Gainesville Interim Public Works Director) for your year of service as our FACERS President!*

## THANK YOU 2020 FACERS SPONSORS

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## FACERS Indexing Local Option Gas Tax

FAC has supported FACERS' request to seek indexing of Local Option Gas Tax. We encourage all members to continue this conversation with your Commissioners and to promote this legislation in Tallahassee. It is important to note that indexing gas tax is not considered a tax increase and does not require additional legislation. If any member would like to know more about indexing local gas taxes, please visit our website at <https://facers.net/resources/legislation/> or reach out to the Board and we will work to get you the information you seek.

## FACERS/CHASTAIN SKILLMAN CIVIL ENGINEERING SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT PROGRAM

### Message From Dean Volakis

The coronavirus pandemic has challenged educators like us to step outside our comfort zones and reimagine educational and learning experiences for our students. With more than 7,000 students, FIU's College of Engineering & Computing (CEC) is one of the largest engineering and computing colleges in the nation. Therefore, we must lead the nation in meeting our students' needs.

During this crisis, in less than a week we were able to transition to remote learning and move all of our in-person courses online so that the transition for students was as seamless as possible. As a major research unit within FIU, with \$36 million in annual research awards, the College is pursuing innovation and interdisciplinary research across a gamut of technologies. In doing so, we are developing our students' entrepreneurial skills while also instilling in them strong community values.

To view full scholarship report, [click here](#).

# New Life Members

## Roger Blaylock & Brian Barnes



We want to congratulate Roger Blaylock on his retirement from Santa Rosa County (31 years!) and also congratulate him on his attainment of FACERS LIFE Membership status!! Roger served as a FACERS officer and ultimately President in 1996.

Also want to say congratulations to Brian Barnes on his retirement from Charlotte County, as well as his new status of a FACERS LIFE member!!! Brian served as FACERS president in 2008 and 2009, and has been a regular and active participant in our programs.

## President's Message

### Tracy Straub

Seasons' Greetings!

As we wrap up calendar year 2020 and hope for a much better 2021, I hope this newsletter finds you in good spirits, good health and enjoying your blessings! Our industry has stayed particularly busy this year, and for that, I am thankful. It seems like a lot of folks would like to move to Florida and enjoy the great outdoors year round.



I am also thankful that we successfully hosted our first ever hybrid conference! All attendees were welcome in person and also via Zoom. I don't mind sharing, this went surprisingly well! If you missed it, look for presentation materials on our website. Our Vice President, Ben Bartlett, provided an exceptional line-up of presentations and I offer my thanks to him and our presenters for a truly great conference under uncertain circumstances. Amy Blaida was of tremendous assistance with the technical set up, and wait, you guessed it, the sponsorships and social. I believe this was a record year for our sponsorships – \$12,250! Way to go Amy and everyone that sought sponsors to support this conference. Attendance was lower than usual, and we expected the technical costs to be high, so we looked for the sponsorships to help keep us in budget, and they did. The hotel must be complimented as well. The Hyatt Regency on Jacksonville's Riverfront in Duval County was instrumental in our technical success and keeping costs low. NACE allowed us the use of their Zoom account, a true life-line and cost saver.

FAC went into this year's legislative conference well prepared. I commend them for being open to a hybrid event and for coordinating directly with the Duval County Health Department on safety measures for those attending in person. FAC staff provided us good information ahead of time, walked us through the meeting options, and maintained constant communication. I'm very appreciative of FAC's support and the direct assistance we get from Milan Clayton and Karen Sapp.

I share all of that because if you didn't register for this Fall Legislative Conference, I encourage you to attend the Annual Summer Conference scheduled for June 30 – July 2, 2021 at the Hyatt Regency in Orlando, Orange County, knowing that you can do so in a safe environment, in person or via web. If the climate remains uncertain, we will host another hybrid event, and the Board has already discussed that hybrid events may be the way of our future. So I look forward to "seeing" you there! If you have meeting topics you would like us to consider for the summer, please reach out to Ben Bartlett at [bbartlett@volusia.org](mailto:bbartlett@volusia.org).

FACERS' mission is **"to foster and maintain a high professional spirit among the members, provide instructive and entertaining programs of interest to the members, and to provide an organization through which the public works programs may be coordinated among Florida's Counties, Municipalities and other governmental agencies."** I hope that like me, you are never in doubt of this mission! Whether it's attending one of our meetings, enjoying the roundtable session, or the email communications, FACERS members provide great support to each other. I know that I can ask just about any question and will get solid feedback. FACERS has established committees that are recognized by agencies such as FDOT and FHWA. If you are uncertain of a technical issue, struggling with an agency requirement, want to know how another county does something, don't hesitate to ask. The most disappointment you'll get is to find out that someone else is struggling with the same issue. You may also be asked to join a committee to work through an issue. While it's great to commiserate together, our true success is that we work through issues and are solution oriented. If you haven't gotten more involved because you are uncertain about the benefit or don't have the time, I encourage you to join our next Board meeting (they're via web these days) to hear about all that is discussed. Reach out to me at [tracy.straub@marioncountyfl.org](mailto:tracy.straub@marioncountyfl.org) and I'll make sure you get an invite.

I'll close by saying thank you to my FACERS friends for a such a great presence. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a much more successful New Year!

Sincerely,

Tracy

Member Spotlight  
Chance Powell





The FACERS Member Spotlight this quarter is Chance Powell, PE, who serves on the FACERS Board as a County Member Director. Chance currently holds the position of Traffic Operations Engineer for Walton County Public Works (located in DeFuniak Springs, FL), a position he has held for 6 years. He graduated from Auburn University with a BS in Civil Engineering in 1999. Although his title is Traffic Ops, he is involved in all engineering aspects of the county. Prior to working with Walton County, he was a Vice President and Senior Project Manager with Preble Rish, Inc. (PRI) in their Santa Rosa Beach office for 15 years.

During Chance's time with PRI, he was responsible for design and permitting of many civil projects for both private and municipal clients. While working with PRI, an opportunity presented itself for him to work for Walton County (where he has lived for 20+ years) and although it was, at the time, a very difficult decision to make, he had (and still has) no regrets accepting a position in the public sector. Walton County is one of the fastest growing counties in the state and it is a great place to live and work.

Chance and his wife Erika have two daughters, Sloane (11) and Whitney (7). They spend most of their free time on the water in the Florida Panhandle and the Florida Keys. Fishing, lobstering and boating are some of his favorite pastimes that he is blessed to share with his three girls. Chance also enjoys restoring early Broncos, motorcycles and boats.

## National Association of County Engineers

From CEO/Executive Director Kevan Stone:

While public works departments across the country finding themselves designated as an essential service through the pandemic, the over three thousand NACE members have showed the dedication and steadfastness despite the public health dangers. Since March, NACE has found themselves reacting and re-purposing to assist in these efforts.



Earlier this year, NACE released a best practices guide compiled completely by member counties across the country. These best practices provided our members insight into how their colleagues across the country were approaching this unprecedented health crisis, while at the same time assuring the health of its staff while continuing to provide the services their communities count on. To access this free guide, please visit our

homepage at [www.countyengineers.org](http://www.countyengineers.org).

NACE has also been hard at work advocating for sound infrastructure policy at the national level. FACERS members joined with other NACE delegations to attend our 2nd annual fly-in and met with high-ranking officials from the White House, USDOT and congressional committees of jurisdiction. We look forward to hosting and growing these fly-ins as the years progress. Being recognized as a national leader in infrastructure policy, NACE members (with FACERS in attendance) attended a White House South Lawn event with President Donald J. Trump to promote the positive NEPA reforms rolled out by the rump Administration. NACE is proud to have a seat at the national table and looks forward to working with a new Administration next year.

Finally, we want to formally invite you to attend our Annual Conference this coming April 19-22 in Riverside County (Palm Springs), California. As of today, we are moving full-speed ahead with a full, in-person conference, adhering to all local and state mandated health safety measures. We have a great conference planned, filled with educational sessions, the most cutting-edge technologies to explore and the opportunity to exchange ideas with your fellow NACE members. Guest registration will open soon, keep an eye on your inbox!

As we approach the holidays, the NACE staff and Executive Committee would like to wish all FACERS a joyous and safe holiday season and best wishes for a happy new year. See you in 2021!!!

Best,

Kevan Stone

CEO/Executive Director

National Association of County Engineers

## Save the Date: 2021 FACERS Annual Meeting

