



Advancing women
Advancing transportation
Michigan Chapter

CHAPTER NEWS

www.wtsinternational.org/chapters/michigan

Inside this issue:

- 2 Detroit Curling Club Event
Headshot Event
- 3 2023 WTS MI Scholarship & Awards Banquet
- 4 2023 WTS MI Scholarship & Awards Banquet (Cont.)
- 5 2023 WTS MI Scholarship & Awards Banquet (Cont.)
- 6 2023 WTS MI Scholarship & Awards Banquet (Cont.)
- 7 2023 WTS MI Scholarship & Awards Banquet (Cont.)
- 8 Upcoming Events
Get Involved
WTS History
- 9 Corporate Sponsors

Dear Members, Sponsors and Friends,

March kicked off with one of our signature events – the Annual Scholarship and Recognition Banquet where over one hundred members, sponsors and guests joined the celebration presenting scholarship winners and recognition awards. And did I mention the Silent Auction fundraising for future scholarship awards? Carrie Warren, Senior Project Manager for MDOT’s Blue Water Bridge Plaza Expansion Project, shared an overview and status of the project. Carrie highlighted the challenges and opportunities in the public involvement process where meetings drew more than three hundred interested participants.

The banquet coincides with a month-long celebration of Women’s History Month. Overall – the celebratory theme can be extended to the outlook for the transportation industry as national funding and attention is on preserving and improving our transportation systems while providing equitable transportation services. This shift in emphasis supports the value of transportation careers and the WTS Mission to attract, sustain, connect, and advance women.

Many volunteers make this annual event meaningful and fun, so I would like to recognize those who devoted hours and support to the event, awards and recognition committee. A special thank you goes out to Kelly Ferencz, Lisa Whitehead and Miranda Spare, seasoned volunteers who organized and produced the banquet.

WTS Michigan is proud of our thirty sponsors who contributed to this year’s event including sustaining sponsors and ten new sponsors. Their generous donations provide half of the Scholarship Funds distributed. The remainder of funds, support programming and events for the chapter.

It is especially exciting to have the opportunity to present scholarships to support future transportation careers. This marks the eighth year that the WTS Michigan Chapter has awarded scholarships of up to \$2,000 to each winner. The four scholarship award winners this year are working towards degrees leading to careers in teaching, transportation planning, maritime engineering, and civil engineering.

We are proud to recognize industry leaders, projects, and companies in six award categories. Congratulations to the winners and we appreciate your contribution of time, expertise and leading by example in the work that you do for Michigan’s transportation industry.

Another reason to celebrate is membership growth of 11% since last year’s member count of fifty-four brings us to 60 members – higher than the last several years. We will be looking to expand membership throughout the state this year with additional events, programs, and networking opportunities. The WTS Michigan Chapter has over 300 followers on LinkedIn and each event draws new followers and members. With over 8,000 members WTS International leads in the advancement of women in transportation and membership expansion beyond traditional modes such as roads and bridges and into maritime, air and transit and non-motorized travel with inclusivity. Our chapter will follow this lead in building additional chapter resources and programs.

The outlook for future growth and opportunity in transportation related careers at all levels is bright coinciding with and advancing the US Department of Transportation’s priorities in Transformation-Designing for the Future, Equity, Climate and Sustainability and Safety.

Looking forward to seeing you soon!

Theresa Petko, President

Join the 2023 Central Region conference committee!

The WTS Central Region conference will be hosted in Chicago September 17-19, 2023, gathering the WTS Central Region chapters to share skills, learn more about regional projects, and network. We are seeking volunteers to serve on the Central Region Conference Planning Committee. The committee will perform a range of tasks including developing unique speakers and panel content, marketing/communications, sponsorship, scholarship, day-of assistance, or other specific tasks. Participation could involve as little or as much time as you are interested in giving! Please contact the CentralRegion@wtsinternational.org if you are interested in learning more about how you can support conference planning.



Connect with WTS Michigan on social media to learn more about upcoming events and opportunities.

CURLING SOCIAL

On January 20th, WTS members and friends met at the Detroit Curling Club to enjoy some time networking and learning the art of curling. A great time was had by all. The event was such a success that curling will return in January 2024.



HEADSHOT EVENT

On February 15th, the Michigan Chapter hosted a headshot and networking event at Abarant Ales in Howell. In addition to having a professional headshot taken attendees enjoyed appetizers and games of cornhole.



2023 Scholarship & Awards Banquet

On March 2, members and friends of WTS Michigan gathered together to celebrate the accomplishments of women in the transportation industry. Awards were presented to individuals who embody the values of WTS and scholarships were presented to four young women, graduate and undergraduate students, whose achievements and aspirations were noteworthy. Chapter scholarship winners automatically qualify for scholarships at the national level. Our guest speaker for the evening was Carrie Warren, from the MDOT Blue Water Bridge Authority. Carrie shared with us the highlights and challenges of the Blue Water Bridge Plaza Expansion Project. A silent auction raised \$2200 for our Scholarship Fund. Scholarship and award winner bios can be found on the following pages.



2023 Scholarship & Awards Banquet (Cont.)



Magdalena Cavka-Helene M. Overly Graduate Scholarship

Magdalena is pursuing a PhD in Transportation Engineering at Michigan State University, with an expected graduation date of August 2026. She graduated with her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from University of Zagreb in Croatia in 2019 and 2021. During her undergrad, she worked as a teaching assistant and developed a passion for traffic safety and human factors. Her true passion is teaching and mentoring students to share her knowledge and her goal is to be a university professor and to continue to share her knowledge.

Srishti Jaipuria-Jannet Walker-Ford Legacy Leadership Graduate Scholarship

Srishti is pursuing her Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Michigan with an expected graduation in 2023. She previously received her Bachelor's in Civil Engineering from COEP Technological University in 2019. Her passion for urban planning started back in her home city in India. In her graduate studies, her focus has been on equitable and sustainable communities. She is currently working for AECOM focusing on optimizing all forms of transportation to provide accessibility for all.



Elyse Soracco-Sharon D. Banks Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship

Elyse is studying Mechanical Engineering at the University of Michigan (U of M) and is expected to graduate in May of 2025. She is actively involved in the Society of Women Engineers and Michigan Fabrication Club. Her family has worked in the maritime industry and that's where her interest started. She has a passion for helping countries through movements in the shipping industry. She is currently working with other students to design a robot to retrieve cubes and deliver them to a specified location. She has been accepted into the Entrepreneurship Leadership Program at U of M.

Alli Hummel-Molitoris Leadership Undergraduate Scholarship

Alli is studying Civil Engineering at Michigan Technological University (MTU) and is expecting to graduate in April of 2023. She is a member of the local MTU Society of Women Engineers chapter and local MTU American Society of Civil Engineers chapter. She is also the chair of the Evening with Industry Committee for MTU SWE Chapter. Alli interned with City of De Pere, Wisconsin for two summers where she was responsible for construction observation, land surveying, & permit reviews. Most recently, she interned with MSA Professional Services and will be returning there after graduation as a Graduate Engineer in the Public Works Division. Her goal is to incorporate sustainability practices in civil engineering projects.



2023 Scholarship & Awards Banquet (Cont.)



LAUREN WARREN, PE, PTOE, PMP
WTS MICHIGAN MEMBER OF THE YEAR - 2022

- Committed and active in WTS Michigan for over 15 years:
 - Current Vice President
 - Past Secretary & served in four different Committee Chair positions
 - Served on subcommittees and supported wherever needed
- She led the initiative to review and approve our chapter bylaws in 2022. She has assisted in the Central Region Virtual conferences and been a past panelist. She has volunteered as a speaker and mentor for Cap Stone classes.
- Lauren attended the WTS International Chapter Leadership Training in the fall and is a past graduate of the WTS Mid-Career Leadership Program.
- Lauren currently has two female interns and is providing them valuable work experience and is a fantastic role model.
- Lauren embodies the Mission & Vision of WTS International to “..attract, sustain, connect, and advance women’s careers to strengthen the transportation industry.”

I-69/I-475 INTERCHANGE RECONSTRUCTION INNOVATIVE TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS - 2021

- The I-69/I-475 Interchange serves several major economic generators, and the “I-69 International Trade Corridor” coalition promotes it as a commercial gateway and multi-modal transportation hub.
- This design procurement was accelerated a year in order to utilize the Rebuild Michigan Bond funding and was the final link between improvement projects that occurred to the west and east along I-69.
 - Bergmann put together a plan addressing several critical duration concerns (RR, permitting, etc.), which was used as a guide.
 - MDOT and Bergmann developed strategies based on inspections/evaluations of 21 bridges and roadway systems which minimized community and environmental negative impacts while upgrading the corridor to maximize positive community impacts.
- There were 10 women in leadership roles: 3 from MDOT, 2 from prime firm (Bergmann), and 5 were with subconsultants (Access Engineering, Somat, and AECOM). Traffic control and constructability reviews were performed by woman-owned businesses (Best Barricade and Great Lakes Engineering Group).



2023 Scholarship & Awards Banquet (Cont.)

CINCAR CONSULTING GROUP, LLC (C2G) EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR- 2022

- C2G is *People Centric, Client Focused, & Community Minded*, and aligns with WTS International Vision of “*Equity & access for women in transportation*”.
- C2G is a DBE/SBE firm, with one of the two owners being female.
- In 5 years, C2G has grown to over 15 professionals:
 - 64% women
 - 54% individuals of color
 - 2 women interns (one to become full time after graduation)
 - Part woman-owned business
- C2G leaders have been involved at the local, regional, and international level of WTS for over 20 years.



EDWIN TATEM, PE HONORABLE RAY LAHOOD AWARD - 2022

- Edwin Tatem has had an esteemed career in the industry working in both public and private sector. Ed is currently a Senior Vice President at WSP and manages the Central Region PM/CM group.
- His passion for people and community shines through at work and in his volunteer organizations. He leads his team, which is over 25% women, to make a difference in the industry and in the community.
- Ed has a strong focus on community and minority engagement and has proactively sought opportunities to introduce underserved students to STEM topics from elementary through high school. He has volunteered countless hours in schools and sports, particularly in the City of Detroit. He coaches boys and girls at Detroit PAL, which helps youth find their greatness through athletic, academic, and leadership development programs. He has encouraged women to participate in the MDOT Bridge Challenge and the Construction Science Expo for students, to encourage professionals to be role models and influence the next generation of leaders.
- Ed is a past President of ITS Michigan and COMTO, and a decade long supporter of WTS!

2023 Scholarship & Awards Banquet (Cont.)



PAUL AJEGBA, PE

ROSA PARKS DIVERSITY AWARD - 2022

- Paul's esteemed career in the transportation industry has transformed projects and his past agency (MDOT), while advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion both internally and externally for the betterment of the industry.
- He has promoted women and individuals of color to prominent positions, exhibiting the value of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce. Under his leadership, he established the Diversity and Inclusion Officer position to incorporate DEI in all MDOT's planning and administering of transportation projects and services.
- As MDOT Director, he and the MDOT team led the Governor's vision and administered the largest MDOT program, tripling in size, to rebuild Michigan infrastructure, which included a strong small business program. He created the Mentor Protégé program to assist WBE/SBE/DBE businesses toward their prequalification goals.
- For years, Paul has been a strong advocate to expand the pool of diverse candidates through his vision, development, and expansion of the Transportation Diversity Recruitment Program (TRDP) partnering with over 60 internships in 2022.
- His leadership to increase diversity in the workforce and provide equitable opportunity for all will be his legacy in the industry.

LAURA MESTER, CPA

WTS MICHIGAN WOMAN OF THE YEAR - 2022

- Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) for the Michigan Department of Transportation
- Past WTS Michigan Vice President, who actively supports WTS
- Speaker and panelist at numerous WTS, AASHTO, MAASTO, MITA, ACEC, Michigan Aeronautics, TRB, & DBE/Small Business Development Conference events, to name a few.
- When Laura speaks, our elected officials, her peers, and the public listen due to her unmatched knowledge with the public's best interest in mind.
- Laura has prioritized inclusion and equity in the workplace and has been recognized, along with her colleagues by being awarded the 2022 President's Transportation Award for Equity.
- Laura started and led a successful Community of Learning program at MDOT that is dedicated to mentoring young women in a management career path under the guidance of female leaders.
- Laura's best attribute is that she always makes herself available to discuss issues and provide career advice.



Upcoming Events

05/17—Social Event—Top Golf

Join us at Topgolf in Auburn Hills, MI from 4-6 PM for an evening of fun and networking. All are welcome to attend, from novice to pro! All proceeds will go to the WTS MI Scholarship Fund. Registration details will follow soon!

June 16— Blue Water Bridge Tour

Join WTS for a tour of the Blue Water Bridge construction project. Keep an eye out for registration.

July—Annual WTS Scholarship Golf Outing

Get your foursome together and join WTS at the Wheatfield Valley Golf Course for our annual scholarship golf outing. Registration information is coming soon!

Gordie Howe Bridge Tour is coming this fall, date TBD.



From May 10–12th, The Great Intersection will bring together transportation leaders and professionals in Atlanta, Georgia to explore the essential relationship between transportation and equity. Experience plenary panels, breakout sessions, technical tours, exhibits, workshops, receptions, and so much more at #WTSAC2023

Additional information regarding *The Great Intersection*, including the preliminary conference agenda, can be found at www.wtsannualconference.org. See you in Atlanta for #WTSAC2023!

Get Involved with WTS

WTS Michigan has a variety of committees for members who are interested in getting more involved in the chapter. If you are interested in joining a committee, please contact our chapter president Theresa Petko, petkotheresa@gmail.com and we will put you in touch with the committee chair.

There are opportunities available to serve on the following committees.

Membership:

Recruit and retain chapter members.

Scholarship:

Organizes fundraising events and the award of multiple undergraduate and graduate scholarships to help female candidates achieve their goals as a transportation professional.

Programs:

Plan WTS Michigan Chapter events.

Communications:

Facilitates communication with members and friends of WTS through newsletters, social media and the chapter website.

Mentoring/Diversity:

Works to advance the WTS vision for equity and access for women in transportation.

Chapter History

WTS Michigan was founded in 1998 to support the advancement of women in Michigan's transportation industry. The Michigan Chapter is a dynamic and interdisciplinary group of professionals committed to transforming the transportation industry through the advancement of women. We actively support our future colleagues and introduce students to a broad variety of transportation-related careers.

PLATINUM LEVEL



HNTB



Michael Baker
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GOLD LEVEL



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