

# Summer 2021 Newsletter



## President's Message:

Well, summer is here. No, I will not start singing songs by the Beach Boys however, with summer comes vacations. For me who grew up in the Philadelphia area, going “downshore” is a must.

For those looking for alternative vacation ideas, I would suggest visiting the ASCE historical sites. There are over 20 of them across the state and can be found at this link provided. [Historic Landmarks | ASCE](#). While this is not one of them, the second photo is of the Austin Dam in Potter County which is worth the detour if you have the time and are traveling through the Pennsylvania wilds. In 1911, the dam failed, caused catastrophic flooding which resulted in 78 deaths. As a result, this inspired legislation to regulate the construction of dams in the Commonwealth.

I also took some time to collaborate with ASCE in discussing the Infrastructure discussions that have been going on recently, this op-ed was published in the Pottstown Mercury and several other local newspapers. You can read the column in Page 2 of this newsletter. I would encourage you to get involved in advocacy and become an ASCE Key Contact if you are not already.

The Branch will take a break event wise for the Summer and will be back in the fall. The Branch has been having discussions to see if we can get back to in-person events. Even as we do get back to the swings of things in a sense, we will still continue to hold our virtual programming which has worked out well in allowing our members to earn PDH's toward their licensure renewal requirements.

The Lehigh Valley Section will be hosting their annual Summer Picnic at Hugh Moore Park in Easton on August 26<sup>th</sup>. This serves as the Sections Annual meeting where they will induct the new Board. It's a good time and a great opportunity to network. Details on that event will be forthcoming.

We thank you for your participation and look forward to seeing you at a future Branch or Section meeting.

*John Caperilla, ASCE Reading Branch President*

## ASCE Reading Branch Board of Directors

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[Guest column: We need to address infrastructure needs today | Opinion | pottsmmerc.com](#)

Published in the Pottstown Mercury June 22, 2021

We are seeing both in Harrisburg and Washington serious discussions on infrastructure which is an encouraging sign, including bipartisan discussions with President Biden on a long-term plan.

While the [American Society of Civil Engineers](#) (ASCE) 2021 [Report Card for America's Infrastructure](#) gave an overall grade of C-, a GPA outside of the D range for the first time in 20 years, we still have a funding gap of over \$2.5 trillion.

If left unaddressed, over the next 20 years this gap will cost each American household \$3,300 a year, or \$63 a week due to costly and unnecessary vehicle repairs, more expensive products and shipping costs, leaking pipes and higher energy costs. It is imperative that Congress find a robust solution to our infrastructure challenges this year that helps American families and domestic industry alike.

Meanwhile, in Harrisburg, the General Assembly is considering paying a larger portion of the State Police budget with revenue from the General Fund, as opposed to the Motor License Fund. The Motor License Fund was originally created by Act 89 to provide necessary revenue to infrastructure projects.

Action by the General Assembly to firewall this funding can help avoid crises like the one we experienced in November 2020, when PennDOT announced a \$600 million funding budget shortfall that nearly put a stop to construction and design projects. Protecting the Motor License Fund revenue for its intended purpose – road and bridge projects – can ensure we continue improving our infrastructure here in Pennsylvania and reverse decades of declining conditions.

ASCE's most recent state report card for [Pennsylvania's infrastructure in 2018](#) gave both roads and bridges a grade of a D+, grades you would not want to take home to your parents. Nearly 15% of Pennsylvania's bridges are in poor condition, one of the highest rates in the nation, and nearly half of the state's roads are in poor or just fair condition. Today is the day to solve our infrastructure issues at the local, state, and federal levels.

As engineers, our first and foremost obligation is to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public and we thank our elected officials for their leadership on this important matter.

*John Caperilla, of Perkiomenville is president of the American Society of Civil Engineers Reading Branch*

**Call For Volunteers**  
**ASCE 2022 PA Infrastructure Report Card**

Every four years since 2006, the four Sections of ASCE in PA (Central Pennsylvania, Lehigh Valley, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh) have developed and released their own PA Report Card. Using a simple A to F school report card format, the Report Card provides a comprehensive assessment of our current infrastructure conditions and needs, assigns grades, and makes recommendations for grade improvements.

As anticipated, the ASCE 2022 PA Report Card (PARC) Committee is gearing up for their next release in May 2022. The PARC Committee is currently looking for volunteers to assist Category Champions in grading and composing their chosen PARC category with additional support from the Report Card Co-Chairs and ASCE Headquarters. The effort would be approximately a 9–12-month commitment, with volunteers needed for the following categories:

<b>Aviation</b>	<b>Hazardous Waste</b>	<b>Schools</b>
<b>Bridges</b>	<b>Inland Waterways</b>	<b>Roads</b>
<b>Dams</b>	<b>Levees</b>	<b>Solid Waste</b>
<b>Drinking Water</b>	<b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b>	<b>Stormwater</b>
<b>Energy</b>	<b>Passenger Rail</b>	<b>Transit</b>
<b>Freight Rail</b>	<b>Ports</b>	<b>Wastewater</b>

For more information and to volunteer please reach out to our Co-Chairs, David DiGioia and Michelle Madzellan, at [ddigioia@mcmahonassociates.com](mailto:ddigioia@mcmahonassociates.com) and [memadzellan@elagroup.com](mailto:memadzellan@elagroup.com). Remember, this is a unique opportunity that is only available every four years, so please sign up.

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**Contact Us:**

The ASCE Reading Branch sends out a newsletter on a quarterly basis to inform our membership of events and happenings within our Branch. If you have news items for future newsletters, please free to contact us.

John Caperilla | President ASCE Reading Branch | [jcaperilla@mctish.com](mailto:jcaperilla@mctish.com)

Find us on LinkedIn: Search “**ASCE Reading Branch**”