



Newsletter

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Building on a Strong Foundation: Leading ACI Nebraska Toward Innovation, Education, and Collaboration in 2025

I am honored to serve as President of the Nebraska Chapter of the American Concrete Association for 2025. Stepping into this role, I recognize the incredible leadership that has come before me, and I am eager to build upon that foundation with some fresh ideas and a shared vision for our industry. This organization plays a vital role in shaping the future of the concrete industry through innovation, education, and collaboration. I have a terrific board to assist me in accomplishing these roles over the next 12 months.

Shawn Wentworth
2025 ACI Nebraska President
Enterprise Precast Concrete



As an Architectural Precast Concrete producer, my company's engagement with ACI may differ than yours. However, this diversity strengthens us as we learn from each other through collaboration. Through this collaboration, innovation can be discovered, and innovation is always needed for our industry. The board and I will work hard to find innovative programs that will help push us all forward. I saw some of this innovation firsthand on January 31st at the Annual ACI Awards Banquet in Lincoln at the Champions Club. Several projects utilized concrete techniques that were not common within our industry which had extraordinary results! The pride for those involved in these award-winning projects cannot be missed. I am already putting the call out there for next year. If your team is tackling a unique challenge due to schedule, technique, or solving an engineering issue this year, please consider submitting your project for recognition in 2026! The Awards Banquet is an inspiring evening of innovation for those of you that truly love our craft.

More **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** on page 2 . . .



Industry leaders and award-winners met on January 31 at the Champions Club in Lincoln.

INSIDE: Award-Winning Projects, Tom Reading Award Winner, Scholarship Recipients, and more!

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PRESIDENT's MESSAGE . . . continued

During the Awards Banquet, ACI-NE also awarded a scholarship for students attending Nebraska Colleges at the Associates, Undergraduate, and Graduate levels. We are always looking for bright students that show a passion for our industry with the goal of improving our workforce. If you have interns that are helping you this summer that show enthusiasm for our industry, tell us about them so we can make sure they have an opportunity for an ACI-NE Scholarship. We also plan to provide education programs for our members throughout the year to educate our own workforces.



*Shawn Wentworth takes the podium as
ACI Nebraska Chapter's 2025 President*

Finally, I look forward to getting to know as many of you as possible. The relationship we build with each other is as important as the projects we are building. A great chance to build those relationships is at our annual member golf outing. We are finalizing the date and location and will get this information out to you shortly. Again, I believe that working together, we can drive innovation, elevate our industry that will not only build stronger structures, but also strong relationships.

American Concrete Institute Nebraska Chapter

Awards of Excellence

ACI Nebraska Annual “Awards of Excellence” Project Winners

The purpose of this competition is to recognize outstanding work in concrete design & construction practices within the State of Nebraska.

Projects must be noteworthy or innovative for their use of concrete. The concrete may be precast, pre-stressed, cast-in place, tilt-up or concrete masonry. Special uses of concrete or innovative concrete construction techniques will be recognized. The hierarchy of the 2 different levels is as follows:



The Award of Excellence represents the top class, being presented to the most innovative and noteworthy projects submitted.

This year, ACI's Nebraska Chapter recognized five different projects, with three projects earning "Outstanding Achievement" and two projects will be earning our top honor, "Award of Excellence."

The pages which follow highlight this year's award-winning projects and the teams who contributed to their success.



N-15, US-34 North & South, Seward is an NDOT project awarded to Constructors in December 2023 for \$9.9 million to construct over 31,000 SY of 9" doweled Concrete Pavement, 6,000 SY of 8" concrete pavement, over 5,000 SY of Sidewalks and nearly 3,500 SY of Driveways. The scope also included storm sewers, concrete removal and replacement, and new lighting and traffic signals. This 1.46-mile project spans from the BNSF railroad tracks south of town to Pinewood Ave on the North side of town. Originally planned as a 2-year project, it was condensed into a single year, requiring milestones such as opening the road by the 4th of July and completing sidewalks and paving before school started. The team followed the 7-phase plan with slight modifications to improve public conditions and accelerate the schedule.

Community engagement was a priority throughout the project. Constructors, in partnership with NDOT and Gerhold Concrete, hosted a Kids in Construction 4th of July event, drawing over 200 children for handprints in concrete, equipment exploration, and free snow cones. Additional initiatives included:

- » Storytime with a construction worker at Chapters Books and Gifts, attracting more visitors than Santa the previous year.
- » Purchasing and distributing gift cards to local retailers.
- » Participating in a fundraiser for Ridgewood Rehabilitation and Care Center.
- » Donating to the Seward Christmas Parade.

And due to the community engagement, the public response to the project was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing appreciation for the completed work.



OWNER: Nebraska Department of Transportation
ENGINEER: Nebraska Department of Transportation
GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Constructors' Inc.
CONCRETE SUPPLIER: Gerhold Concrete Company



ELKHORN Nebraska

The new Goodwill facility in Elkhorn, Nebraska, is a 15,000-square-foot retail space that combines design innovation, sustainability, and functionality. As Goodwill Omaha's first ground-up build in over a decade, the project showcases key advancements in concrete use:

- » Precast exterior walls serve as both structure and finish, eliminating steel columns and maximizing retail space.
- » Precast entry columns replaced traditional cast-in-place methods, improving aesthetics and speeding up construction.
- » The design meets Omaha's Urban Design Standards while effectively screening rooftop equipment.
- » Low-maintenance precast walls and polished concrete floors enhance durability and longevity.

By making precast walls structural, the need for steel support columns was eliminated, creating an open, flexible interior and reducing costs. The integration of precast columns with a curtain wall system is a rare feature in Nebraska, providing cost efficiency, scheduling flexibility, and precise finishes. The precast walls, made with 5000 psi concrete using Type II and Type I cement with color admixtures, ensure both strength and visual consistency. Grout-set connections for the precast columns provided robust stability through advanced coordination and construction techniques.

The project tackled cost control, a tight construction schedule, and Omaha's Urban Design Guidelines by leveraging precast concrete as a structural system. This approach improved material efficiency, met energy design requirements, and aligned with urban planning standards.

Overall, the facility highlights the resilience and versatility of precast concrete in meeting modern design, thermal insulation, and budgetary goals.



OWNER: Goodwill Industries, Inc.
ENGINEER & ARCHITECT: LEO A DALY
CONTRACTOR: C2 Building Company
CONCRETE CONTRACTOR: Mackie Construction
PRECAST SUPPLIER: Enterprise Precast Concrete
CONCRETE SUPPLIER: Concrete Supply Company



Bluestem Middle School is a 180,000-square-foot facility developed by Omaha Public Schools to address educational and community needs in a growing area. The project includes 278 precast panels covering 82,500 square feet of wall surface. Insulated sandwich panels with four inches of XPS insulation provide an R-value exceeding 20 for energy efficiency.

In addition to serving grades six through eight, the school offers public meeting spaces, athletic facilities, a library, mental health offices, and performing arts areas, all connected by a central common

The design optimizes the site's topography for access, pedestrian flow, and outdoor programming. The library, above the east entry, emphasizes reading, while the west entry provides direct access to the gym, track, and fields. The three-level academic wing on the north side minimizes the building's footprint and enhances efficiency. Separate bus and car traffic improve drop-off and pick-up flow.

Designed for 900 students, the academic wing includes shared learning spaces and efficient circulation to reduce travel time. The building maximizes natural light and offers exterior views in classrooms and common areas. Additionally, the facility features an ICC-500-rated storm shelter, designed to withstand 250 mph winds.



OWNER: Omaha Public Schools
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: TD2 Engineering & Surveying
ARCHITECT: RDG Planning & Design
GENERAL CONTRACTOR: McCarthy Building Companies
CONCRETE CONTRACTOR: Daedalus Construction
PRECAST SUPPLIER: Enterprise Precast Concrete
CONCRETE SUPPLIER: Ready Mixed Concrete Company



The Mosaic Masterpiece, an 80-square-foot custom enhancement of an existing interior stoop—truly a one-of-a-kind project. This transformation also included applying 780 square feet of microtopping over an interior stamped concrete floor and 340 square feet of exterior microtopping.

Originally installed 25 years ago, the stamped concrete floors had become difficult to maintain. The homeowners sought a modern, easy-to-clean solution while preserving an artistic touch. The contractor proposed a concrete microtopping overlay, a polymer-modified cement coating that creates a seamless, durable, and aesthetically refined surface.

The interior stoop's design was inspired by an abstract rug the homeowners found online. Recreating this intricate pattern required extensive custom color mixing, as the desired shades didn't exist in standard water-based stains. After months of meticulous testing, seven custom colors were developed. Executing this design required both technical precision and artistry. A custom template was created in collaboration with a local sign company, allowing precise layering of colors. Each section was carefully masked to ensure the artwork's clarity and depth. The main floor and exterior patios were coated in Nickel Grey microtopping, with careful finishing techniques to maintain a uniform, non-burnished look. Achieving consistent coloration was particularly challenging, as every trowel pass naturally darkens the surface.

This project tested the full creativity and craftsmanship of the contractor. The Mosaic Masterpiece stands as a testament to the dedication, precision, and innovation of Stephens & Smith Construction, blending function with artistic expression in a truly remarkable way.



HUBBARD ORANGUTAN FOREST



ACI NEBRASKA
AWARD OF EXCELLENCE



OMAHA's

Henry Doorly Zoo

This project involved renovating and reimagining the orangutan exhibit at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo. The existing exhibit, built over 40 years, included an upper and lower exhibit with multiple structures. The goal was to remove the oldest sections, expand animal care areas, and create a new outdoor exhibit.

The 19,000-square-foot design by Holland Basham focused on replicating the animals' natural habitat while enhancing the visitor experience. The project required selective demolition, new construction adjacent to existing structures, and careful planning to maintain functional space relationships.

Edge Themed Environments, with 23 years of experience in zoo projects, managed complex concrete elements. They constructed two temple structures with over 300 cast concrete medallions, some weighing over 3,000 pounds. Hand-carved concrete landforms created realistic habitats, and large artificial trees, reaching 20-25 feet high with 20-foot canopies, were built using rebar, concrete, and epoxy.

Public hallways retained original cast-in-place walls, now adorned with rock textures, lush foliage, and hand-carved orangutan portraits. Handmade concrete flowers replicate the size of those found in orangutan habitats, adding to the immersive experience.



OWNER: Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium
ARCHITECT: Holland Basham Architects
MEP Engineer: Morrissey Engineering
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Performance Engineering
CIVIL Engineer: Lamp Rynearson
CONTRACTOR: Kiewit Corporation
CONCRETE CONTRACTOR: Edge Themed Environments

• 2025 TOM READING AWARD WINNER •

It's "Hammer Time"

Steve Weidenhammer receives Tom Reading Award

With over 42 years of dedicated service in the field of civil engineering, Steve has significantly impacted the industry through his expertise, leadership, and commitment to advancing concrete technology and education.

Steve was instrumental in increasing awareness of modern uses of concrete, driving innovations that have enhanced both the acceptance and cost-effectiveness of this vital material. His role as Principal in Charge of Construction Management, Materials Testing, and Inspections for numerous high-profile projects across Nebraska and Nevada has demonstrated his deep knowledge and innovative approach to concrete materials.

Throughout his career, Steve actively participated in and led various professional organizations, including serving as President of the APWA Nebraska Chapter and the Nebraska Chapter of the American Concrete Institute. His leadership and active participation on numerous committees have significantly contributed to the profession, fostering a collaborative environment for the advancement of concrete technology.

Steve's contributions to the advancement of technology are noteworthy. He has developed innovative uses and handling techniques for concrete, improving its quality and design. His work in preparing mix designs for soil cement mixtures, roller compacted concrete, and Portland cement concrete has set standards in the industry.

In addition to his technical achievements, Steve has been a dedicated educator and mentor. He developed and taught numerous training courses and workshops and served as an adjunct professor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. His role as a Professional Engineer Examiner and trainer for the American Concrete Institute certification programs has been pivotal in transferring knowledge and skills to the next generation of engineers and technicians.

Steve's consistent contributions over his extensive career, coupled with his unwavering commitment to excellence, make him a deserving candidate for the Tom Reading Award. His impact on the field of concrete technology and his dedication to professional development are truly commendable.



*Mike Willman awards Steve Weidenhammer
the 2025 Tom Reading Award*

ACI Nebraska Chapter Awards Three with Educational Scholarships

Each year, the ACI Nebraska Chapter provides scholarship awards to deserving students based on their interest and ability in concrete design, construction, and/or materials. Three \$1,500 scholarships offered in the name of the late Nebraska Chapter Executive Secretary Richard T. DeLorm and are given to one associate, one undergraduate, and one graduate student in Nebraska.

ASSOCIATE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Garrett Brown from Wilber, Nebraska

Garrett is a student at Southeast Community College in Milford, pursuing an associate degree in Building Construction Technology. One of his recommendation letters sent by Bruce Stutzman, “Garrett’s work ethic is truly exceptional. He consistently demonstrates a level of diligence and dedication in everything he does. He approaches every project with a sense of responsibility and a determination to excel—key traits that will serve him well as he grows in his career.”

UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Lane McMillan from Papillion, Nebraska

Lane is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in construction management at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and is expected to graduate in May 2026. He has a strong interest in concrete structures and material design. One of his professors, Emmeline Watson, stated, “Lane is a highly engaged student who consistently contributes to discussions and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the subject matter. His dedication to academic and professional growth is evident in his exceptional performance across all courses, particularly in areas related to concrete construction and materials testing.”

GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Emma Hain from Lincoln, Nebraska

Emma is pursuing a master’s degree in architectural engineering with a focus on Structural Engineering at the University of Nebraska–Omaha. With a 4.0 GPA, she already has impressive work experience, having completed internships with Engineering Technologies Incorporated, LEO A DALY, and currently with HDR.

As John Savage from HDR mentioned in his letter of recommendation, “Emma is practical—she wants to know how structures get built. Whenever we make a site visit, she asks many questions, not just of the structural engineers but also of the contractors. She wants to understand how the pieces go together, why things are detailed the way they are, and how they affect the constructability of a design. HDR has had many structural interns during my career, and I can honestly say that Emma is one of the best.”





2025 ACI Nebraska Chapter Board of Directors and Officers

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Report

Submitted by Mike Willman

The 2024-2025 training season is about complete with eight classes completed. Six ACI Field Testing Grade I Certification programs held in Cozad, Gering, Columbus, Omaha, and Lincoln. Two ACI Strength Testing Technician Classes held in Omaha, and one ACI Adhesive Anchor Installer certification held in Omaha.

The 2024-2025 Training season is scheduled to be completed with one ACI Adhesive Anchor Installer Certification and one ACI Flatwork Finisher certification in March, One ACI Transportation Inspector, and one ACI Field Testing Grade I Certification program in April in Kearney.

It has been a successful year for the certification programs. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers that helped to make the 2024-2025 certification season a success.

Please check the websites for updates on the remaining programs. The 2025-2026 training season will begin in November 2025. The training classes will be posted on the ACI Nebraska Chapter website www.acinebraska.org and on the Nebraska Concrete & Aggregates Association www.nebrconcagg.com the end of October 2025.

The classes filled very quickly this year so please plan on registering early next season when the schedule is posted to assure you get into the class you want.



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