




ACEC MIDWEST STATES CONFERENCE

JUNE 3-6, 2025

Doubletree by Hilton, Durango, CO

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

TUESDAY, JUNE 3

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|---------------|---|---|
| 7:30 AM | Registration for Conference – <i>Ballroom Foyer</i> | |
| 8:00-9:15 AM | Breakfast Program – <i>Doubletree Ballroom</i>
Speaker: <u>David Merritt P.E., Principal Water Resources Consultant, AECOM</u>
Description: Hear briefing and welcome from ACEC Colorado Vice President David Merritt. |  |
| 9:40-11:45 AM | CEO Roundtable Discussion (Small/Medium 1-75 employees) – <i>Silverton / Purgatory Room</i> | |
| 9:40-11:45 AM | CEO Roundtable Discussion (Medium/Large 76+ employees) – <i>Mesa Verde / La Plata Room</i> | |
| 12:00-1:15 PM | Lunch Program – <i>Doubletree Ballroom</i>
Speaker: <u>Steve Hall, Executive Vice President - Advocacy, ACEC</u>
Description: Mr. Hall will provide a briefing on key legislative developments in Congress, including the importance of balanced tax treatment for engineering firms, federal infrastructure funding, and recent regulatory actions by the current presidential administration. |  |
| 1:40-4:00 PM | Delivering Powerful Feedback: Making Impactful Growth Seminar – <i>Doubletree Ballroom</i>
Speaker: <u>Ryan W. Bouda, M.S., Professional Development Specialist, Leap Training & Coaching</u>
Description: Feedback is a crucial leadership tool, yet delivering it effectively can be challenging. This session introduces an 8-step model for handling tough feedback conversations with confidence. Attendees will learn to prepare their mindset, foster openness, and deliver actionable feedback that drives growth. By combining active listening and clear communication, attendees will gain strategies to transform difficult feedback discussions into opportunities for connection, trust, and improvement - empowering teams to thrive. |  |
| 5:30-7:30 PM | Welcoming Reception & Dinner – <i>Animas River Grille Restaurant</i> | |

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4

7:50-11:40 AM

Relationship Based Negotiations and the Power of Consent-Driven Consultant Cultures Seminar –

Doubletree Ballroom

Speaker: [Dan Oblinger, Founder, Leadercraft](#)

Description: Buckle up and pack your comfortable shoes! Dan Oblinger is a hostage negotiator, consults with ACEC member organizations all over the US on their leadership programs, and serves consulting engineering firms by nurturing cultures of active listening, emotional communication, and negotiation for engineers! Expect the unexpected as Dan uses "game-i-fied" exercises to put powerful communication and negotiation principles into motion with all our attendees. Topics include: Appropriate use of rapport and empathy, active listening skills, storytelling, negotiation practices, bias control, emotional regulation, and scenario-based education centered on the hottest trends in conflict and opportunity in the AEC world.



11:50-12:50 PM

Lunch Program – *Doubletree Ballroom*

Speaker: [Steve Wolff, General Manager, Southwestern Colorado River Water Conservation District](#)

Description: The Southwestern Colorado River Water Conservation District, based in Durango, is one of the regional entities in Colorado responsible for water policy and water development. Steve has been at the core of the discussions and negotiations concerning the operations of the Colorado River system for the next two to four decades.



Afternoon/Evening

ON YOUR OWN

THURSDAY, JUNE 5

8:00-9:15 AM

Hard Conversations – An Ethics Case Study in the Destructive Power of Conflict Avoidance and the Redemptive Power of Honesty Seminar –

Doubletree Ballroom

Speaker: [Aaron Mann, Principal, General Counsel – Risk Management, Terracon Consultants, Inc.](#)

Description: It began with a nervous call from our client. They suspected that a letter (on state letterhead) that our consultant provided may have been a forgery. And they were right. Thus began a year-long journey into the mind and work product of a former employee who was willing to do nearly anything to avoid confrontation—on this and other projects. In the spirit of open collaboration, we will share an actual incident and response to demonstrate how conflict avoidance can damage the trust placed in your organization—and how transparent honesty can rebuild that trust. We will take the audience through



the initial event, our internal investigation, and our discussions with regulators and clients. While we will highlight the pressures and dangers of conflict avoidance, we will also provide tools to manage responses to similar crises. While the process was painful, by being honest and transparent, we were able to demonstrate that the actions did not reflect the culture of Terracon and we emerged with stronger client and regulator relationships than before the incident.

9:15-9:30 AM

ACEC Coalitions - Opportunities to Engage –
Doubletree Ballroom

Speaker: [Brandon Claborn, Vice President, Environmental, WSB](#)

Description: Brandon will share the benefits of joining one of ACEC's Coalitions.



9:45-11:45 AM

ACEC Kansas Meeting – *Anasazi Room*

9:45-11:45 AM

ACEC Missouri Meeting – *Doubletree Ballroom*

9:45-11:45 AM

ACEC Oklahoma Meeting – *Animas Room*

Lunch/Afternoon

ON YOUR OWN

5:30-7:30 PM

Reception & Dinner – *Animas River Grille Restaurant*

FRIDAY, JUNE 6

8:00-9:30 AM

Breakfast Program on Revolutionizing Risk: The ACEC Business Insurance Trust (BIT) Group Captive for Eligible ACEC Member Firms –
Doubletree Ballroom

Speaker: [Mary R. Erchul, P.E., Executive Director, ACEC Business Insurance Trust](#)

Description: Join us to learn about the exciting new initiative from the ACEC Business Insurance Trust (BIT): the launch of its own Group Captive Insurance Company. Discover what a group captive is, why ACEC BIT is creating one, and what sets this captive apart from others. We'll cover the specific lines of coverage included, how the structure will operate, and the benefits for participating firms. You'll also get key information on eligibility, the implementation timeline, and the official rollout plan.

