

NACE ANNUAL STATE REPORT

State Association Name: Minnesota County Engineers Association (MCEA) For year of 2025

Number of Counties: 87 Number of State Assoc. Members: 87

Number NACE Member: 87

State Annual Meeting/Conferences held at: Cragun's Resort and Conference Center, Brainerd, MN
on dates: January 20-23, 2026

Other significant meeting held during the year: MCEA Summer Conference (June 11-13, 2025)

Notable achievements of State Association and/or Individual members:

1. Ryan Thilges, P.E., Blue Earth County Engineer/Public Works Director elected MCEA President
2. MCEA 2025 Awards presented at the 2025 Annual Meeting in January:
 - Outstanding County Engineer – Joe Triplett, Chisago County
 - Project of the Year Award – Rice County – Highway 19 Roundabout
 - Special Project of the Year – Ottertail County – The Heart of the Lake Trail
 - Friend of Minnesota Counties Award – Amy Grothaus, Braun
 - Outstanding Service to MCEA Award – Mark Vizecky, MnDOT State Aid
 - Outstanding Contribution to Better MN Transportation Award – Jim Grothaus
3. NACE Awards given to Minnesotans at the 2025 Conference include:
 - Rich Sanders, Polk County, Rural Engineer of the Year
 - Jodi Teich, Stearns County, Urban Engineer of the Year

Important Events in which State Association participated during year:

1. Wayne Sandberg, Washington County and NACE Secretary & Treasurer and Jodi Teich Ottertail County and NACE North Central Region, VP attended the NACE Fly-In in conjunction with the NACo Legislative Conference.
2. Several MCEA members attended the Minnesota Transportation Alliance annual Washington, DC Fly-In in September, and Transportation Day at the Capitol in St. Paul in March.
3. Several MCEA members attended the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) Annual Conference, as well as AMC's Policy Conference and Legislative Conference, continuing to highlight the role of the county engineer position in counties' leadership teams.

Issues and topics of particular importance for which action and efforts of State Association were directed during the year:

State Issues:

- Legislative Advocacy: MCEA continues to be highly engaged in the state's legislative process with the association's Legislative Committee cohosting weekly conference calls with MnDOT during the legislative session. Our platform mirrors that of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC). MCEA members work with our legislators and regularly provide testimony on transportation policy and funding bills. Major policy issues relate to speed limits, trunk highway project cost participation, state aid design and engineering standards, bonding for local roads and bridges, environmental issues and regulations/mitigation related to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. County engineers serve on several statewide committees focusing on how the new GHG rules will affect local road and bridge agencies. We continue to lobby for long term dedicated transportation funding for all of the state's roads and bridges, and for the local road wetland replacement program bank.

National Issues:

1. Members of the MCEA Environmental Committee continue to track changes to Army Corps permitting requirements and the related impacts on construction projects, ongoing changing regulations related to the Northern Long Eared Bat and Rusty Patched Bumble Bees, and monitor the status of the listing of the Monarch butterfly while guiding members on options to minimize impacts to both construction and operations.
2. MCEA continues to work through the Environmental Committee to track issues related to regulatory agencies halting progress on spending the money that has been awarded to local agencies.

Report Submitted by: JinYeene Neumann, Carlton County Engineer
Minnesota State Director Date: 04/08/2026