

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – 2020 IN REVIEW



2020 did not turn out as we had planned, but what year ever does? David Schwartz said, "If you believe [something] is impossible..., then it is." In other words, if you don't think something can happen, then your mind is turned off to figuring out ways to make it happen. **NCSITE did not respond to the coronavirus and to NCDOT's cash diminution by cancelling NCSITE for the year.** Our mission and strategic

plan didn't go away last year due to the coronavirus and the economy, but it certainly changed how we worked to fulfill and deliver them. Instead of saying "it can't happen", NCSITE responded last year with **"What if?"** We are sad about the many events that didn't happen, but our mission stayed the same and we pivoted to still provide as much as we could for our members, albeit virtual, socially distant, and/or outdoor. I am excited to be a part of this and to work with such a great Section to adapt to what came our way in 2020.

Through the many ways included in the following pages, and other ways not mentioned, **NCSITE volunteers believed it was possible to still deliver our mission to each other and stepped up to make it happen.**

As the 2020 President of NCSITE, I'd like to thank the NCSITE Board, volunteers, and members for the work that each person did to deliver NCSITE's mission to each other and to the NCSITE community last year. There were countless hours of Members doing work on behalf of NCSITE, from teaching the increased number of webinars; planning / moderating / presenting at the June Mid-Year Meeting and the November Annual Meeting; participating in dozens of committees, council meetings, and user group meetings; restarting the mentoring program; redesigning the website; expanding our reach through social media; coordinating with our four student chapters; reviewing scholarship and award applications; and so much more -- and doing it all in a year where a pandemic and reduced transportation budgets weighed heavy on us.

2020 SECTION LEADERSHIP

- President – Josh Hurst, PE (Kittelson/Raleigh)
- Vice President – Joe Hummer, PhD, PE (NCDOT/Raleigh)
- Secretary – Stephen Bolt, PE (City of Charlotte)
- Treasurer – Justin Carroll, PE (STV/Charlotte)
- Past President – Eric Lamb, PE, FITE (City of Raleigh)
- Section Director – Kellie Reep, PE (Stantec/Charlotte)
- Consultant Vendor Council Chair – Peter Kurtz (Quality Counts/Charlotte)
- Strategic Initiatives Council Chair – Ed Johnson, PE, FITE (Retired/CAMPO)
- Traffic Engineering Council Chair – Sarah Wicklund, PE (Patriot Engineering/Raleigh)
- Transportation Planning Council Chair – Lauren Triebert, PE (VHB/Raleigh)
- Young Member Council Chair – Kristina King Whitfield, PE (Kimley-Horn/Raleigh)
- Annual Meeting – Sravya Suryadevara, PE (WSP/Raleigh)
- Awards – Rebecca Duffy, PE (City of Raleigh)
- Audit – Mark McDonald, PE (City of High Point)
- Membership Committee Chair – Andrew Ritter, PE (HDR/Raleigh)
- Mentoring – Todd Brooks, PE (Dewberry Engineers/Raleigh)
- Operations – Claudio Figueroa, PE (Neel Schaffer/Florida)
- Scholarship – Kellie Reep, PE (Stantec/Charlotte)
- Southern District Representatives – Christa Greene, PE (Stantec/Raleigh), Mike Surasky, PE, PTOE (WSP/Raleigh), Stacie Phillips, PE (Kimley-Horn/Raleigh)
- Simulation/Capacity Users Group Co-Chairs – Soheil Sajjadi, PhD (Arcadis/Raleigh) and Bradley Reynolds, PE (WSP/Raleigh)
- Signal System Users Group Chair – Kevin Baumann, PE (Kimley-Horn/Raleigh)
- Safety Users Group Chair – Sravya Suryadevara, PE (WSP/Raleigh)
- ITS Users Group Chair – Amanda Good, PMP (Kimley-Horn/Raleigh)
- NEPA Users Group Chair – Emily Love, AICP (Stantec/Raleigh)
- Pedestrian/Bicycle Users Group Chair – Caitlin Tobin (Kittelson/Charlotte)

MEMBER INVOLVEMENT IN SDITE/ITE

NCSITE member Kellie Reep is currently an active member of the Leadership ITE Marketing Committee and the ITE Younger Members Committee, where she assisted in the creation of and framework for the new ITE Matson and Hammond Mentoring Program. NCSITE member Christa Greene is serving as the Vice-Chair of the International ITE Traffic Engineering Council and has been elected to serve as SDITE Secretary in 2021.

NCSITE is eager to host the **Virtual 2021 SDITE Annual Meeting**. NCSITE members Terry Arellano and Mike Surasky are the SDITE Co- Chairs for the SPAM (Annual Meeting Committee). NCSITE member Meredith Van Duyn is serving as the Co-Chair of the SDITE Communications Committee.

The 2024 SDITE Annual Meeting will take place in Wilmington, NC. There will be a lot of new transportation infrastructure in the area by 2024 to provide for some great technical tours. The meeting location is located on the Historic Riverfront, so there will be a lot of fun activities for attendees and their guests/families.

SECTION AWARDS

The success of NCSITE is due to the dozens of volunteer engineers and planners who organize NCSITE activities and who provide high-quality transportation technical expertise throughout the state.

The NCSITE Awards Committee receives nominations from our membership for all the Award categories, and then strives to honor the most deserving individuals for that year. The NCSITE Awards Committee was honored to present the following awards in 2020:

- New Member Award - Kristina Whitefield, PE
- Todd B. Delk Young Professional Award - Peter Kurtz
- Jay Quinn Technical Excellence Award - Carrie Simpson, PE
- Robert J. Dodge Professional Image Award - Kenneth Putnam, PE
- R.V. Moss Lifetime Service Award - Terry Arellano, PE
- Outstanding Project Award - Wake BRT: New Bern Avenue Corridor, Raleigh
- President's Award: Sarah K. Wicklund, PE
- Contribution to Transportation Award - to be awarded early 2021

REGULAR MEETINGS & TRAINING

Early in the pandemic, the NCSITE Board of Directors met and discussed ways to help our membership get through this difficult time, both by providing technical content and by providing (virtual) human contact. The Board decided to offer free **“Back to Basics”** webinar sessions that would provide professional development hours (PDH) credit on a weekly basis. These sessions were hosted by our Councils and User Groups and provided information on a wide range of topics including **traffic forecasting, traffic signal progression, low-cost safety countermeasures and much more.**

NCSITE normally hosts two membership-wide meetings each year. Due to pandemic restrictions, the Mid-Year Meeting was hosted virtually on June 25, 2020, with more than 200 attendees. **This meeting offered significant technical content in two sessions and provided 2 PDH's at no cost.** The meeting included virtual breakout rooms and an end-of-day virtual social.

The **Annual Meeting was also hosted as a virtual event during the week of November 16th.** A robust agenda was presented over a three-day period to more than 300 attendees, providing 9.5 PDH's at a minimal cost. The meeting also included virtual social events, award presentations, and officer elections. The silent auction benefiting the Scholarship Fund also went virtual and raised over \$1,000 for the cause.

The NCSITE Board of Directors continued to meet monthly holding virtual lunch meetings. The Board focused on adapting to the challenges of programming and operating in 2020, and completed significant updates to the NCSITE Charter and Bylaws.

The **Traffic Engineering Council (TEC)** conducted 16 meetings/webinars for 15.5 PDH's. The Council was responsible for developing the technical agenda for the Annual Meeting. The **Transportation Planning Council (TPC)** and the Traffic Engineering Council (TEC) together offered 30 hours (including a weekly Back to Basics webinar to cover core transportation topics), and most of them for free since the hours were offered virtually. NCSITE also promoted almost 100 hours of other relevant webinars that were being offered across the country. The TEC and TPC also found ways for attendees to spend time together via virtual social gatherings in the evenings or after webinars

NCSITE's six user groups promote information sharing and technical training focused on specific areas of expertise. Groups typically meet several times per year in various locations throughout the state. Highlights for 2020 include:

- The **Signal Systems User Group** and the **ITS User Group** conducted three webinar sessions for 2.5 PDH hours.
- The **NEPA User Group** met regularly with virtual meetings. This user group includes active participation and collaboration with NCDOT and FHWA and has almost 200 members.

STUDENT / YOUNGER MEMBER SUPPORT

NCSITE believes that student engagement is key to the success of our organization, so we strive to maintain a strong connection with our student chapters at **North Carolina A&T University, North Carolina State University, the University of North Carolina - Charlotte, and the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill**. NCSITE members routinely provide networking opportunities and support the presentation of student research at our meetings. Stacie Phillips and Kristina Whitfield attended and supported students attending the **Student Leadership Summit, in Atlanta, Georgia on February 28th**.

This year the **Young Member Committee (YMC)** collaborated with the NCSITE Operations Committee to help improve our social media strategies. The YMC committee also assisted in encouraging students to apply for NCSITE scholarships. The YMC is actively planning a virtual traffic bowl for February 2021.

To encourage interaction between the students and NCSITE professionals, **all NCSITE meetings are free to students**. Each student chapter is also asked to submit an Annual Report to NCSITE, which is a factor in determining the winner of the Paul D. Cribbins Cup, honoring the Outstanding Student Chapter of the year. This year NCSITE was very pleased to award the **2020 Cribbins Cup to NC A&T University**.

Each student chapter receives \$500 annually from NCSITE to assist with expenses and programming. Additionally, NCSITE covers all travel expenses not covered by SDITE for the winning quiz bowl student chapter to attend the SDITE Annual Meeting.

NCSITE currently offers **nine annual college scholarships for a total of \$21,000 per year to students** enrolled at the four universities with student chapters. NCSITE is considering establishing a scholarship endowment program to provide sustained funding for scholarships.

In 2016 NCSITE formed the Young Members Committee to encourage graduating students to join our section and to provide professionals under age 35 with venues for networking and technical development. In 2019 the Young Member Committee transitioned to Council level, allowing all age groups to have a voice on the Board.

The **NCSITE Mentoring Program** seeks to support and encourage young professionals to become highly effective leaders by pairing them with seasoned professionals within North Carolina's transportation engineering and planning field. After a successful second round of protégés and mentors, the **Mentoring Program Executive Committee has begun planning for the third installation of the program to commence in early 2021**.

APPLICATION OF TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

NCSITE continues to offer the **NC Main Street Assistance Program**, aimed at helping small towns in our state reclaim the main streets in their communities and create vibrant walkable spaces that improve the economic health of their towns. In 2019, NCSITE transportation experts began meeting with municipalities who are interested in the program, with the intent of having one-day workshops and charrettes to assist communities in transforming their Main Street. In 2020 NCSITE continued to explore NC Main Street opportunities with potential towns in North Carolina.

NETWORKING EVENTS

Whether it is a **User Group meeting, the Annual Meeting**, a Career Fair, or a service project, all NCSITE events include opportunities for networking, or are accompanied by a Social event for members to network. This was challenging in 2020 due to the pandemic. But we were able to host entertaining virtual networking events as part of the Mid-Year and Annual Meetings.

In October The **Consultant Vendor Council** partnered with ITS-Carolinas for a socially-distanced golf outing. This was the first time many colleagues had seen each other in person since March 2020.

The **Operations Committee** led a redevelopment and relaunch of the NCSITE website last year, which was a major undertaking. The new website significantly increased the functionality and user experience for our members.

An ad-hoc **Social Media Committee** worked to expand NCSITE's social media presence and member communication. NCSITE refined and consolidated channels for communicating with members and non-members, with a focus on LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter, and through NCSITE emails.

K-12 STEM OUTREACH

Unfortunately NCSITE was unable to offer any K-12 STEM outreach in 2020 due to the pandemic. We look forward to reengaging in school outreach and our participation in activities like Future Cities competitions and Engineer's Week events soon.

NEW MEMBER RECRUITMENT

NCSITE has historically had a large number of Affiliate members, so member recruitment and retention was a big concern for our organization when ITE eliminated Affiliate status in January 2019. With increased focus and programming, we are excited to share that NCSITE increased its membership in 2020. **NCSITE finished 2020 with a membership of 525 total members, which is almost a 10% increase from 2019.** A key part of this increase in membership came from expanding the use of **public agency**

memberships. NCSITE was able establish new public agency memberships with multiple municipalities and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT).

Events hosted by NCSITE have a higher cost for non-members than for members, and the cost difference is frequently at least \$15 in order to encourage non-members to join.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

At the end of 2020, NCSITE had 406 full members, 63 retired/life members, and 56 student members. 47% of our membership has joined NCSITE within the past five years. Our membership is 76% male and 24% female, and improving participation opportunities for women is a key goal for NCSITE.

The majority of our members (69%) are located in the central Piedmont region of North Carolina, while 26% of our members are in the western Mountains region and the 4% hail from the eastern Coastal Plains.

NCSITE membership offers substantial diversity across employment types:

- 37% from private consulting
- 24% from public municipalities
- 21% from state government
- 18% from federal government and other institutions

NCSITE has the distinction of being the only ITE section with a **Committee for People Who Want to Make NCSITE Funner & Other Good Things Like That.** This committee of everyone and no one remains one of our favorite aspects of NCSITE: we make our members happy to be here! The Make ITE Funner committee showed up virtually at both the midyear and annual meetings.

In addition to Making ITE Funner for all who participate, NCSITE encouraged and diversified participation by providing reduced registration fees for public agency members to attend events, offering relevant technical sessions (and AICP CM credits) for planners, providing free registration for students at all events, having public and private sector representation on the Board, and providing a welcoming and atmosphere for attendees from all backgrounds to be part of the Section.

During 2020, NCSITE also provided **discounted registration fees to NCDOT employees** in response to severe funding shortfalls and budget restrictions by the State of NC. This allowed NCDOT employees to participate in our annual and mid-year meetings without being forced to pay out of pocket to attend.

TRAINING / PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NCSITE provided many well-attended training events and educational opportunities for its members. **Over 80 free PDH's were offered by NCSITE in 2020** through our meetings, webinars, and user groups. Through our section communication channels, we also informed our membership of over 100 PDH's that were available through external sources. See the "Regular Meetings & Training" section on page 2, above, for more information.

FIELD TRIPS / TECHNICAL TOURS

As a result of the pandemic, NCSITE did not conduct any field trips or technical tours in 2020.

SERVICE PROJECTS

In memory of former president and Make ITE Funner founder Todd Delk, **NCSITE partnered with the Visual Art Exchange (VAE) in their efforts to prepare a mural for the Wake County affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) in North Carolina.** VAE reached its fundraising goal of \$8,000 for this effort, and NCSITE provided a matching contribution to NAMI of \$8,000. This was a hugely meaningful effort for NCSITE to recognize our friend and colleague.

NCSITE has also **adopted the Rocky Branch Greenway in Raleigh** in memory of Todd. The Rocky Branch Greenway was a favorite of his, both as a great place to ride his bike and also its routing through his alma mater, NC State University. As part of the adoption, NCSITE has committed to regular cleanup events. The first socially-distanced cleanup was held on July 19th (in honor of Todd's birthday), and a second cleanup took place on December 12th. Each cleanup was followed immediately by a networking opportunity where we debriefed at a local microbrewery!

FUNDING SUPPORT

In addition to receiving funding from membership dues and from events, NCSITE receives annual contributions for the Scholarship Fund, and **received over \$15,000 in Annual Sponsorships from consultants in 2020.** Annual Sponsorships provide additional income for the Section and allow sponsors to receive recognition throughout the year in our communications and at all events. In addition, the joint NCSITE / ITS Carolinas Golf Tournament also raised funds for our scholarships. NCSITE also holds a raffle at the Mid-Year Meeting and a Silent Auction at the Annual Meeting to raise scholarship funds.

LEADERSHIP ITE

NCSITE has been very supportive of its members who are interested in LeadershipITE. Program alumni have been recognized by the NCSITE Board for participating in the program. These program alumni have moved into Section leadership roles, including:

- Kellie Reep (2016): Traffic Engineering Council chair from 2017-2018 and current NCSITE Section Director
- Stephen Bolt (2019): NCSITE Secretary in 2020, NCSITE Vice-President in 2021
- Claudio Figueroa (2019): Operations Committee chair in 2020

ADVOCACY

NCSITE continues to support and collaborate with **NC Go**, a statewide transportation advocacy organization. Longtime NCSITE member Larry Goode now represents NCSITE as an official member on the NC Go board.

NCSITE is also a permanent member of the **NC Vision Zero working group** and promotes **BikeWalkNC**, a statewide advocacy organization for nonmotorized transportation.

NCSITE received a grant from SDITE for a **Distracted Driving Service Project**, which was utilized to partner with the **UNC Highway Safety Research Center** to develop posters. These posters have been distributed to over a hundred private engineering practitioners on Twitter, through Vision Zero communities, and through other channels.

