

First State News



The latest news and announcements from ASHE First State Section

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Welcome to the First State News

The latest updates

We are going to try a new format for bringing you recaps of recent events, news, upcoming events, and anything else we can find of interest. Stay tuned while we experiment with a more streamlined version of our traditional newsletter.

Our President, Mark DeSantis is off to a good start with a very successful golf outing and our first two dinner meetings. More on that below.



Of course, the golf outing is the primary mechanism that enables us to provide annual scholarships. Since 1998, First State Section has awarded scholarships totaling \$285,800 (through the 2025 awards) and we are second only to NY Metro Section in cumulative awards (when last we checked).

Our Platinum and Diamond Corporate Sponsors are essential to the success of our scholarship program, but they also help defer the cost of our holiday gala and our Hall of Fame banquet. Our scholarship program and other activities could not be nearly as robust without their generous support.

And individual members contribute to the scholarship fund each year at renewal time, so there is a remarkable commitment within First State Section to students.

One final thought before we get to some recaps. Are you taking full advantage of your membership? Some of you we see only in a blue moon. Come to meetings, engage with fellow members, or join a committee.



Mark DeSantis

Another Successful Golf Outing!

Many of you participated in the 31st Annual Fred Mueller Scholarship Golf Outing, held September 12, 2025 at Odessa National Golf Club, and I am hopeful everyone

had an enjoyable time. We received a lot of positive feedback, but we are always looking to improve and correct, so please do let us know if you had anything but a great time.



As Chair of the Committee, I would like to thank the many volunteers that helped carry the

day. There are too many to mention and I will forget someone for sure, but you saw them in action and I am sure they helped make the event enjoyable for you. Special

thanks go to our beverage cart volunteers, who did their best to canvas the course and satisfy thirsts.



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Nick Hetrick and Philip Horsey

Scholarship Winners Recognized

For the 2025-2026 academic year, First State Section awarded \$20,000 to ten students. Why did the “Big Check” say 19K? That’s still under investigation.

- Fred Mueller Memorial Scholarship: Benjamin Myers, Alexander Reif, and Daniel Porotov
- Kirkor Yilancioglu Memorial Scholarship: Erika Materan, Emily Fasig, and Victoria Parsons
- Delaware Technical & Community College (Hall of Fame): Nathan Agentowicz and Carrie Ryan
- Joseph Vattilana Memorial Scholarship: Luke Depireux and Julia Vitello



Left to right: Philip Horsey, Daniel Porotov, Alexander Reif, Victoria Parsons, Emily Fasig, Nathan Agentowicz, and Nick Hetrick

Five of the students were able to join us at our October 16, 2025 dinner meeting, where they had



a chance to engage with our members, enjoy the sumptuous buffet, and listen in on the technical presentation.

In addition to our scholarship winners, we were joined by other students from our ASHE@UD student chapter, including Sarah

Lopatofsky, Azza Aldarai, Ryan McMahon, and Pia Sandmann. Dr. Heidi Gurdo from the Delaware Technical Community College was also able to join us. Finally, Sabrina Diaz attended with her parents, Brad and Marcella Saborio.



Brian Kisner

Three Speakers for One Price at the October Dinner!

In addition to recognizing our scholarship winners and hobnobbing with the other students, a crowd of nearly seventy were on hand to hear from three speakers at our October 16, 2025 meeting. The joint meeting with ATSSA allowed us to hear perspectives from each of them on roadway safety issues and emerging technologies.

Stacy Tetschner (ATSSA President and CEO) started us out with an overview of the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA). Melodie Matout (Innovation & Technical Services Manager for ATSSA) next spoke about some emerging technologies in roadway safety. David Krahulec (President, Horizon Signal Technologies) rounded out the evening with a presentation on their Residential Driveway Temporary Signal.



John Jensen and Matt Carter

Some Generous Members Showed Their Spirit at Dues Renewal Time

John and Matt are glad to be done with the madness of dues renewal season and we know you all appreciate a downtick in Matt's nagging emails. Well, along with renewals and annual commitments from our Platinum and Diamond Corporate Sponsors, we had a number of individual members that wanted to contribute a little extra to the Scholarship Fund.



From our Hall of Fame members, Raymond Harbeson, Jerry Jalosky, Thomas Clements, Paul Connor, Preston Ayars, Alan Marteney, and Philip Horsey donated to the scholarship fund. Other members included Mark Luszc, Robert McCleary, Ellen Rohrbach, and Matt Carter. In total, these members contributed \$865 to help First State Section be a leader with academic scholarships.

And in one more arena of going the extra mile, George & Lynch and Century Engineering (a Kleinfelder Company) contributed \$350 to defray the cost of students attending our dinner meetings, like we saw at the October event.



Our members and the companies we work for are generous in their support of students...and it's not just in financial ways. In the sixteen years First State Section has supported the ASHE@UD student chapter, countless tours of construction sites, manufacturing facilities, and operations centers have been made enthusiastically possible through the good will of our members. No speaker ever invited by the students to speak at their on-campus meetings has ever refused. Some of our members today can attest to the impact that this support made for them when they were students and active with our student chapter.



Every once in a while, we should stop to reflect on how First State Section members and the organizations and agencies for which we work make a positive impact on supporting students and creating tomorrow's engineering leaders.

Matt Carter

Celebrating Great ASHE Member Projects

Eric Kramer hosted another Project of the Year Showcase, culminating in the November 12th dinner meeting, where over 100 ASHE members and guests gathered to celebrate great transportation projects.



In the Under \$25M category, the James Street Bridge Replacement took the prize, whereas in the Over \$25M category, the North Millsboro Bypass edged out the competition.

In a new edition, inspired by suggestions from Mark Luszcz, the Showcase took a look at legacy projects, those that have been in place for a few years and merit a look to see how they achieved their promises. Matt Vincent and some other “old timers” were

on hand to reflect back on the Elkton Road Improvements (Maryland State Line to Delaware Avenue).



But while the judges’ tastes are impeccable, the people must have their say. Attendees viewed posters of all the submitted projects during the networking hour and weighed in on their choices. The Peoples’ Choice award went to the James Street Bridge Replacement.



It’s great that we can take a night out once in a while to reflect on great accomplishments in Delaware construction projects. Congratulations to all the submitted projects and the teams that accomplished them!





Upcoming Events

Keep an eye out for other announcements, but in the meantime, you should have seen flyers for these (or they're undergoing legal review), so click the RSVP and payment links so you don't miss out.

December 1, 2025 - Holiday Mixer - [RSVP](#)

January 15, 2026 - DelDOT Chief Engineer Mark Luszcz

More Golf Highlights



ASHE First State
38th Annual
Holiday Mixer

Enjoy an evening of cheer with fellow members and guests, hot beverages, dinner, cash bar, and **DOOR PRIZES!**

Please RSVP By November 21st
<https://forms.gle/XCDSPY36N7Z1B5>

Date: December 1, 2025
5:30-9:00pm

Where: Grain Craft Bar + Kitchen
591 Collaboration Way
Star Campus
Newark, DE

Cost: \$40 for members
Bring a guest for \$20
\$10 for Student Members

Parking is Free

Card Payments available using QR code (\$2 processing fee)

Checks payable to ASHE First State can be sent to:
Preston Ayars
George & Lynch Inc.
150 Lafferty Lane
Dover, DE 19901

Member Guest Student