

St. Paul Nonprofit Bolsters Engineering Ranks With North Dakota Agreement

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St. Paul Nonprofit Bolsters Engineering Ranks With North Dakota Agreement Engineering Education Foundation of America inks agreement with the American Council of Engineering Companies North Dakota to facilitate engineering education and [workforce development](#).

By Todd R. Berger

As engineers across the country retire, there are not enough engineering students in universities to make up for the departures. Under the stipulations in just one federal law—the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (2021)—the U.S. needs to hire an additional 88,000 engineers. A St. Paul-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit, Engineering Education Foundation of America (EEFA), has reached terms with the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) North Dakota in a significant step to bolster the engineering ranks across state lines. The agreement that was signed in May will allow the organizations in the two states to collaborate to advance the engineering profession through workforce development and education, including scholarships for engineering students.

“ACEC North Dakota is excited about it,” says ACEC North Dakota Executive Director Mike Krumwiede. “Engineering is struggling with workforce, and we have a shortage. Our long-term goal is to create more engineers, but it takes time to build an engineer. We have to start out young with school-aged STEM groups and then continue with university scholarships [to lead to] more engineers out there to fill the gaps in the workforce.”

The agreement will allow EEFA, which was established by ACEC Minnesota, to operate in North Dakota as a charitable nonprofit to raise funds from engineering companies in that state. Under the agreement, 30% of the funds donated by North Dakota engineering firms will be earmarked for [engineering scholarships](#) to be distributed in North Dakota. Also, 20% of the funds will go toward North Dakota workforce development. If things go as both organizations hope, the agreement will facilitate a significant expansion of financial resources for education and workforce development.

“It’s going to take a lot of people to be able to have the success we want in terms of making sure

kids get interested in engineering,” says Jon Horn, treasurer of EEFA. The more people we can get involved in the EEFA mission [to promote engineering education through securing charitable donations], the better off we’re going to be.”

EEFA and ACEC Minnesota see this agreement as a key partnership on the road to other goals. As ACEC Minnesota Chief Executive Officer Jonathan Curry notes, “This is a big step for our foundation, because it’s the first partnership with a non-Minnesota entity. The goal is for this foundation to support workforce development and scholarship efforts around the country. This agreement creates a key partnership. EEFA is going to share resources with North Dakota, and North Dakota is going to develop its own programs and share resources with the foundation. This idea of shared resources ... is the real crux of the partnership.”

Krumwiede adds, “I think the benefit is going to be not only our ACEC North Dakota chapter, but any other ACEC chapter that would join EEFA are going to be big winners because this is something that’s going to help our companies.”

John Rathke, who sits on the EEFA board of directors and is the Chair-Elect for the national ACEC organization, also sees advantages for other state organizations to partner with EEFA. He notes, “It makes sense from the standpoint there’s an established organizational structure, established legal entity and ability for donations to be applied for the organization without having to create another one themselves.”

But these larger goals start with this agreement. “I think both EEFA and ACEC North Dakota will be big beneficiaries of this agreement,” says Horn. “The relationship will allow ACEC North Dakota to do things they wouldn’t have been otherwise able to do on their own. The advantage for EEFA is it expands our reach and puts boots on the ground in North Dakota.”

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