

LOUISIANA ENGINEERING SOCIETY
BOARD OF DIRECTION MEETING
February 4, 2025
Lafayette, LA

1. The meeting of the Louisiana Engineering Society (LES) Board of Direction was held on Tuesday, February 4, in Lafayette, LA in conjunction with the 29th annual JESC. A quorum was established, and the meeting was called to order by President Melanie Caillouet at 6:10 PM.

Board Members Present

Melanie Caillouet, PE, President
Gavin Gautreau, PE, Vice-President
Clinton Patrick, PE, PLS, 2nd Vice-President
Rachel Kenney, PE, Secretary-Treasurer
Tyler Comeaux, PE, NSPE Representative
Oliver Neal, PE, Young Engineer Representative
James Ellingburg, PE, Past President
Kimberly McDaniel, PE, State Director
David Gereighty, PE, State Director
Hagan Lawrence, PE, State Director
Bliss Bernard, PE, Baton Rouge Chapter President
Joey Krefft, PE, Lafayette Chapter President
Kalyn Partin, PE, Lake Charles Chapter President
Kevin Hurtt, PE, New Orleans Chapter President
Jonathan Ratliff, PE, Shreveport Chapter President
Stan Whitney, PE, PEC Chair
Jeffrey Pike, PE, PEE Chair
Alan Krouse, PE, PEPP Chair
Mary Claire Ruckert, Executive Director

Board Members Absent

Gregory Trahan, State Director
William Vollman, PE, Alexandria Chapter President
Jacob Waitz, Jr., PE, Bayou Chapter President
Morgan McCallister, PE, Monroe Chapter President
Ali Mustapha, PE, PEG Chair
Jennifer Gemar, PE, PEI Chair

2. The Invocation was given by Jeffrey Pike.
3. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

A break was taken to eat dinner.
4. LES Vision & Mission Statement was read by Gavin Gautreau.

5. Acceptance of Agenda –

A motion was made by David Gereighty to add an item to the agenda for a roll-call vote listing the individual voting preferences of the board regarding the industrial exemption survey as referenced in the President’s report to capture who voted how. It was noted that the individual votes previously collected via email would be included in the minutes of this meeting, making it unnecessary for the motion to proceed.

A motion was made by David Gereighty to revote on sending the Industrial Exemption Survey to all LES members, with Kevin Hurtt seconding the motion. A discussion followed regarding whether any new information warranted the revote. The new information presented included the results of the previous vote. During a roll call vote, David Gereighty, Kevin Hurtt, and Jonathan Ratliff voted in favor of adding this item to the agenda, while Melanie Caillouet, Gavin Gautreau, Oliver Neal, Jim Ellingburg, Kimberly McDaniel, Hagan Lawrence, Bliss Bernard, Joey Krefft, Kalyn Partin, Stan Whitney, Jeffrey Pike, and Alan Krouse voted against it. Tyler Comeaux abstained as a non-voting LES Board member. The motion did not pass.

A motion was made by David Gereighty to distribute the LAPELS comments regarding the subcommittee’s summary of the industrial exemption issue and survey, as mentioned in the President’s report, to the board. Melanie Caillouet expressed no objection to sending out the referenced information without requiring a motion from the board. As a result, the motion was not necessary and did not move forward.

A motion was made by Kalyn Partin to accept the agenda with no changes. The motion was seconded by Jim Ellingburg. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Acceptance of the November 2024 meeting minutes –

A motion was made by David Gereighty to modify the November 2024 minutes, changing item 10c – Legislative Update, bullet 2 from 'It was decided that the board would review the survey and revisit it at a later date' to 'It was decided that the board would review the survey, submit comments, and make a decision on how to move forward.' The motion was seconded by Kevin Hurtt and passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Oliver Neal to accept the revised November 2024 meeting minutes with changes. The motion was seconded by Hagan Lawrence. The motion passed unanimously.

7. President’s Report – (see attached)

ACEC/L wants to pass legislation that would name ACEC/L as the nominating authority for PEPP and PEI seats on the LAPELS Board instead of LES. LES ExCom held a call with Barker Dirmann from ACEC/L and proposed a bylaw change as an alternative to pursuing legislation for these LAPELS seats. ACEC/L rejected this proposal and chose to proceed with legislative action. During the last meeting with ACEC/L, LES presented two options for PEPP and PEI seats: 1) LES would submit two nominations to the governor’s office, with

ACEC/L submitting two nominations, or 2) LES and ACEC/L would alternate nominating years for those seats. As of this meeting, LES has not received a response from ACEC/L regarding these options. A lengthy discussion followed regarding ACEC/L's motivations behind this move and the potential implications of pursuing legislative action. It was decided that once Melanie Caillouet receives a response from ACEC/L, it will be shared with the entire board, rather than just the ExCom, to ensure the board is fully informed of any potential legislative developments.

Following the last board meeting, the industrial exemption survey and video were distributed to the board, and the responses received were not favorable. Melanie then sent an informal email poll to the Board, inquiring whether they would support moving forward with efforts to remove or modify the Industrial Exemption. The results were as follows: 16 votes to leave it as is, 2 votes in favor of pursuing legislation to remove it, and 1 vote to revise the legislation. The names of those who voted in each manner, along with the comments from LAPELS regarding the survey, will be included in the meeting minutes.

This requires no action, but the Civil Service Commission will hold a hearing on February 5th to determine whether certain attorney and engineering positions will be reclassified from classified to unclassified employees. The board should be made aware of this development.

8. Secretary/Treasurer's Report – Though the agenda says financial reports as of 1/31/2025 will be reviewed, those reports were not ready in time for this meeting, therefore the financial reports as of 12/31/2024 were to be discussed. The incorrect financial reports were attached to the meeting documents, so it was determined that the correct reports will be distributed with the meeting minutes and discussion pertaining to these reports will be tabled for the next meeting.
9. Executive Director's Report (see attached report)
 - a. JESC Updates – All speaker opportunities have been filled, 51 of 53 exhibitor booths have been sold, and 14 sponsorships have been sold. As of January 28, 388 attendees are registered to attend.
 - b. Honors & Awards Ceremony – The 2025 Honors & Awards Ceremony will be held at City Club of Baton Rouge on February 15, 2025. Tickets are available on the LES website.
 - c. Updated Job Descriptions – Following the board's decision in May 2024 to approve a salary increase and title change for the current Office Manager, Alexa Broussard, an updated title and job description have been drafted for the board's review. Additionally, an updated job description for the Executive Director has also been prepared for review. Both job descriptions incorporate necessary adjustments resulting from the vacancies of the LEF Secretary and in-house bookkeeper positions.

- d. Upcoming Board Elections – Nominations for the state ballot are due to the LES office by March 6, 2025.
- e. Building Update – It was discussed during the LEF Board Meeting that a challenge in selling the building thus far has been that prospective buyers are unwilling to purchase with the current leases in place. As a result, LES needs to consider the possibility of breaking the current lease to facilitate the sale. Mary Claire has been tasked with exploring various rental options moving forward. A discussion also took place regarding the potential for LES to have its own address and office, even if it is not occupied for 35 hours a week.

10. Old Business

11. New Business

- a. LBOPG Appointee – LES is required to send nominations to the governor’s office for a vacancy on the Louisiana Board of Professional Geoscientists. If anyone knows of a candidate who would like to be nominated for this position, please inform Mary Claire by the end of the first week of March.
- b. ACEC/L Board Position – In light of the ongoing situation with ACEC/L, a discussion took place regarding the possibility of adding a non-voting chair to the LES Board for an ACEC/L representative. The chair was initially intended to be held by ACEC/L President and CEO, Barker Dirmann. Melanie will discuss the option of allowing Mary Claire to attend ACEC/L Board meetings and permitting Barker to attend LES Board meetings.
- c. Report from Membership Committee – New Chapter logos have been distributed, and the branding guide is still in the process of being created. Once completed, it will be distributed. The logos are interchangeable depending on the project. Chapters are welcome to request templates from the state office that align with the new branding package. The completed membership video should be ready for distribution any day now.
- d. Update on JESC – The JESC update was given in the Executive Director’s report (item 9). Next year’s JESC will be held on March 4 – 5, 2026.
- e. Alexandria Chapter Report – No report was given. Currently has 101 members.
- f. Baton Rouge Chapter Report – Report was given. Currently has 582 members. The chapter hosted a luncheon in December with DOTD secretary, Chad Winchester. The January luncheon was cancelled due to the snow. Upcoming events include their chapter Mathcounts competition, the Annual Honors Luncheon in conjunction with ASCE on February 18, an E-Week Cocktail Celebration on February 20 and the Annual Wintz Memorial Golf Tournament on March 10 at Pelican Point.

- g. Bayou Chapter Report – Report was given. Currently has 77 members. The January luncheon was cancelled due to the snow.
- h. Lafayette Chapter Report – Report was given. Currently has 369 members. On December 11, the chapter hosted a joint Christmas social with ASCE. The February meeting will host Mike Mazzola, Ph.D., PE, FUEL (Future Use of Energy in Louisiana) Executive Director on February 20. The Haynie’s will be presenting at a luncheon later this year.
- i. Lake Charles Chapter Report – Report was given. Currently has 113 members. The January meeting did not have a speaker, so Kalyn gave a general update on state-wide LES topics. The February meeting will host Gregory Sepeda. The March meeting will host Representative Mark Abraham and Senator Jeremy Stein to give legislative updates. ASCE Lafayette is still trying to join forces with LES and do more in the Lake Charles area. The chapter Mathcounts competition will be held on February 15 and will host 4 schools.
- j. Monroe Chapter Report – Report was given. Currently has 112 members. January chapter meeting hosted Brad Sciulli. A February meeting is scheduled to host Kimberly McDaniel on the 13th.
- k. New Orleans Chapter Report – Report was given. Currently has 510 members. The “2025 Business, Industry and Energy Outlook” luncheon was held on January 15. The next meeting will be a joint meeting with Tulane University and host Dr. Matthew Montemore.
- l. Shreveport Chapter Report – Report was given. Currently has 131 members. The joint meeting in January with ASCE. Upcoming meeting will be held next week. The chapter Mathcounts was held on January 20 with approximately 90 people. Small scholarships are being distributed within the chapter.
- m. PEC Update – 3 names will be needed in 2028 for a LAPELS vacancy.
- n. PEE Update – Reggie Jeter and VJ Gopu are the PEE representatives on the LAPELS at this time. Reggie Jeter will be rolling off the board this year. Nominations for his replacement have been submitted to the Governor’s office, but there has been no update.
- o. PEG Update – No report given. There is a PEG vacancy that names will have to be submitted for.
- p. PEI Update – No report given.
- q. PEPP Update – No report given.

12. Announcements

- a. The next LES Board of Direction meeting is scheduled for **April 11, 2025, in Baton Rouge, LA at GEC.**
- b. Nominations for elections are due to the state office by **March 6, 2025.**

- c. State Mathcounts competition will be held on **Friday, March 28, 2025**, in Pineville, LA.
13. Adjournment – **A motion was made by Oliver Neal to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Gavin Gautreau. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.**