



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAME Foundation Launches Inaugural Soaring Eagle Award Honoring Visionary Leadership in the A/E/C Industry

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) Foundation is proud to announce the **Soaring Eagle Award**, a new national honor recognizing a transformational leader in the architecture, engineering, and construction (A/E/C) industry who embodies the standards of courage, integrity, and vision. The inaugural award will be presented to **Terri Mestas**, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Sound Transit, at the **Soaring Eagle Award Gala** on Wednesday, **March 25, 2026**, during SAME's Capital Week, at the **Bethesda North Marriott Hotel & Conference Center**, in **Rockville, Md.**

Mestas brings more than 30 years of experience leading complex infrastructure programs across aviation, space exploration, military installations, and transportation. At Sound Transit, she oversees the delivery of a \$75+ billion system expansion, one of the largest transit capital programs in the United States. Her previous leadership of the \$30 billion capital improvement program at Los Angeles World Airports—the largest aviation capital program globally—prepared LAX and Van Nuys for the 2026 FIFA World Cup and 2028 Olympic Games. She has also led capital programs for NASA, the Department of Defense, intelligence agencies, and the Los Angeles Community College District.

"Terri Mestas is a trailblazer whose leadership inspires excellence and drives progress across the A/E/C industry," said Maj. Gen. Tim Byers, SAME Foundation President. "She embodies the spirit of the Soaring Eagle—lifting others, expanding opportunities, and leaving a legacy of impact. We are honored to recognize her as the inaugural Soaring Eagle Award recipient."

The **Soaring Eagle Award** will be presented at an evening gala that will convene leaders from across the public and private sectors, including military officials, corporate executives, and emerging STEM talent. Organizations and individuals are invited to become benefactors of the gala and align with a movement that champions leadership, innovation, and national impact. All net proceeds benefit the SAME Foundation and its mission to foster engineering leadership for the nation.

To learn more or become a benefactor, visit the [Soaring Eagle website](#), or contact Kathy Off, koff@same.org, 703-549-3800.

About the SAME Foundation

Founded in 2016, the [SAME Foundation](#) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to fostering engineering leadership for the nation. It funds STEM outreach, leadership training, and mentorship programs that advance national resilience and workforce readiness. The Foundation has earned a Platinum Seal of Transparency from Candid (GuideStar) and a four-star rating from Charity Navigator. They are registered with the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC - #59814) and Benevity.

About SAME

Established in 1920, the [Society of American Military Engineers](#) (SAME) unites public and private sector professionals from across the A/E/C and national security communities. With over 22,000 members, more than 100 Posts around the world, and a National Office in Alexandria, Va., SAME drives partnerships, delivers solutions, and develops people to support America's national security priorities.