

# Small Business Symposium and Meet the Chiefs 2026

# SAME

APRIL 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>

**Seattle Airport Marriott**  
3201 South 176th Street, Seattle, WA

# Welcome

On behalf of the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) Seattle, Portland, and Mount Tacoma Posts, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the combined 2026 Meet the Chiefs (MTC) and Small Business Symposium (SBS) event. We are thrilled to have you join us for this event!

This event offers a unique opportunity for businesses, industry leaders, and government representatives to share insights, explore new avenues for partnership, and foster collaboration and networking. Our goal is to provide a platform to make meaningful connections and disseminate key information related to upcoming government opportunities.

Throughout the day, you will hear from NAVFAC Northwest, USACE Seattle, Walla Walla, and Portland Districts, the SBA, and a host of businesses and government agencies who will present their perspectives on the challenges and opportunities facing the federal industry today. Additionally, SAME National Vice President Dean VanderLey, P.E., F.SAME, will provide a SAME update on the national level. There will also be ample opportunities to engage in dynamic discussions and network with like-minded peers.

A special thank you to our dedicated volunteers and generous sponsors whose support makes this event possible. And thank you to all the event participants in attendance making this a success – this event is for you.

- *Valerie Wade*

Valerie Wade, PE  
SAME Seattle Post, Programs Chair  
PM, Environmental Engineer | WSP



# Event Schedule

<b>Time</b>	<b>Thursday, April 23</b>	<b>Location</b>
7:30 am - 4:30 pm	<i>Booth set up</i>	<i>Salons F-G</i>
7:30 am - 8:00 am	Registration, Breakfast, & Networking	Foyer
8:00 am - 8:05 am	Pledge of Allegiance, Welcome, & Opening Remarks	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
8:05 am - 8:10 am	Platinum Sponsor #1 Spotlight - Shive-Hattery	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
8:10 am - 8:20 am	SAME Post Updates: Seattle, Tacoma, and Portland	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
8:20 am - 8:30 am	SAME National Update	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
8:30 am - 9:30 am	SBA Small Business Update and Q&A	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
9:30 am - 9:45 am	Break	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
9:45 am - 10:45 am	Small Business Panel: Interactive discussion with our PNW SB representatives	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
10:45 am - 11:00 am	Break	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Government to Business Matchmaking (Session #1)	Evergreen Ballroom (Salons H-I)
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Lunch	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm	Government to Business Matchmaking (Session #2)	Evergreen Ballroom (Salons H-I)
2:30 pm - 4:30 pm	Business to Business Matchmaking	Evergreen Ballroom (Salons H-I)
4:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Ice Breaker	Bar (Foyer), Networking (Evergreen Ballroom)

# Event Schedule

Time	Friday, April 24	Location
7:30 am - 8:30 am	Registration, Breakfast, & Networking	Foyer
8:30 am - 9:00 am	Introductions, Color Guard, Pledge of Allegiance, Opening Remarks	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
9:00 am - 9:30 am	USACE Walla Walla District	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
9:30 am - 10:00 am	USACE Over the Horizon Project Overview (virtual)	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
10:00 am - 10:25 am	Coffee Break	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
10:25 am - 10:30 am	Platinum Sponsor #2 Spotlight - P2S	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
10:30 am - 11:00 am	USACE Portland District	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
11:00 am - 11:45 am	NAVFAC NW	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
11:45 am - 12:00 pm	SAME Post Scholarship Updates: Seattle, Tacoma, and Portland	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
12:00 pm - 1:15 pm	Lunch Break/Sponsor Exhibit Area Open	Foyer (Lunch) Salons F-G (Booths)
1:15 pm - 1:20 pm	Platinum Sponsor #3 Spotlight – Stantec	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
1:20 pm - 1:50 pm	Sentinel Program Overview	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
1:50 pm - 1:55 pm	Platinum Sponsor #4 Spotlight – Parsons	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
1:55 pm - 2:30 pm	Afternoon Break/Booth Breakdown	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
<i>3:00 PM</i>	<i>Complete Booth Breakdown by 3 PM</i>	<i>Salons F-G</i>
2:30 pm - 3:30 pm	USACE Seattle District	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
3:30 pm - 3:45 pm	Raffle	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)
3:45 pm - 4:00 pm	Closing Comments	Washington Ballroom (Salons A-E)

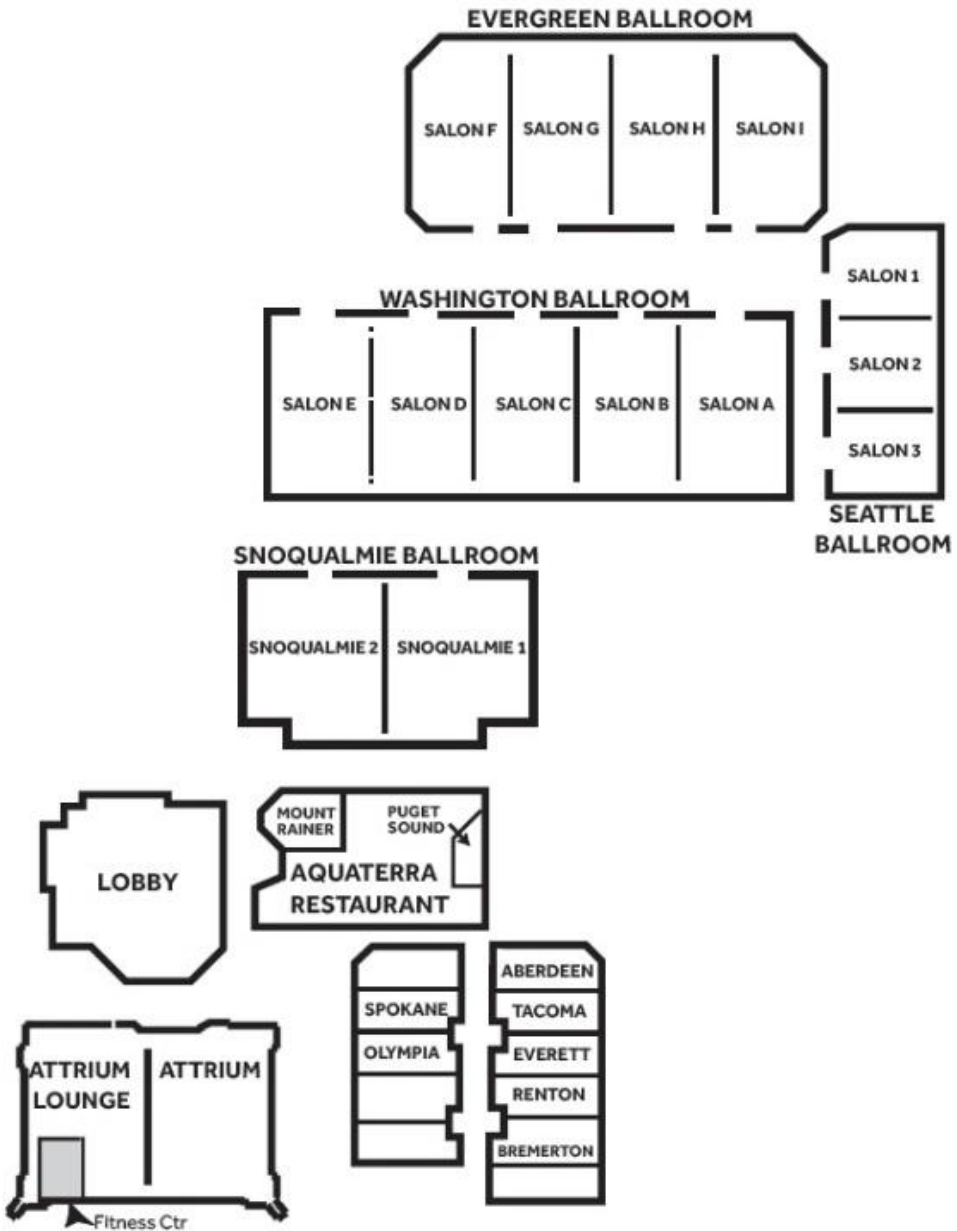


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# MARRIOTT SEATTLE AIRPORT



# Venue Map

# Dean VanderLey



**Dean VanderLey,**  
**P.E., F. SAME**  
**SAME National Vice President**  
*Director of Defense Programs*  
*HDR*

Dean VanderLey, P.E., F.SAME, is the Director of Defense Programs and the East Region Federal Business Group for HDR, leading a high performing team to achieve program growth and deliver quality projects in support of Defense and Federal clients. Dean joined HDR in October 2025 after a 34-year Navy career where he retired as a two-star Admiral, having served as the Commander of Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) and the Navy's 46th Chief of Civil Engineers. There, he led one of the world's largest public engineering and construction management agencies, managing a \$20B+ annual worldwide program. He also commanded NAVFAC Pacific in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii and NAVFAC Atlantic in Norfolk, Virginia, positions in which he led large planning, design, construction, environmental and real estate programs across the Pacific and Atlantic regions. Dean has been a member of SAME since 1998, serving as a member of the Executive Advisory Group and a strong supporter of SAME while in uniform and now serving as a National Vice President.

# Guest Speaker



**® U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

**Major Blake Ritchey**

**Deputy District Commander  
Walla Walla District  
Northwestern Division**



Major Blake Ritchey assumed the role of Deputy District Commander, Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on 3 July 2025. He assists the commander in the oversight of more than 800 engineers and professionals responsible for the Civil Works, Interagency Programs, and the Operations of USACE projects and activities for Eastern Washington, all of Idaho and portions of Oregon, Nevada, Wyoming and Utah.

MAJ Ritchey, from Peachtree City, Georgia, earned his AB Political Science undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia (2011). He holds four master's degrees a Master of Science in Geological Engineering from the Missouri University of Science and Technology (2016), Master of Science in Kinesiology from Texas A&M University (2021), Master of Operational Studies from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (2025), and Master of Business Administration from the University of Kansas School of Business (2025). MAJ Ritchey is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP). He is a graduate of the Command & General Staff College and a Distinguished Military Graduate of the Engineer Captains Career Course, Engineer Basic Officer Leadership Course, and UGA Army Reserve Officer Training Corps program.

Before joining the Walla Walla District, MAJ Ritchey served more than 18 years on both active duty in the United States Army and in the Georgia Army National Guard. He enlisted as a 63H Heavy Track Repairer on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007, reclassified as an 11C Indirect Fire Infantryman in June 2008, and commissioned as an active-duty 12A Engineer Officer in May 2011.

MAJ Ritchey's active-duty operational experience, earliest to latest, includes serving as a the Brigade Engineer, 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division; Sapper Platoon Leader Charlie Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion (forward deployed); Company Executive Officer Alpha Company, 299th Brigade Engineer Battalion; and Battalion Construction Officer, 299th Brigade Engineer Battalion at Fort Carson, Colorado (2012-2015); Assistant Battalion Operations Officer (AS3 Current Operations), 326th Brigade Engineer Battalion; Battalion Logistics Officer (S4), 326th Brigade Engineer Battalion; and Company Commander, Alpha Company, 326th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Fort Campbell, KY (2016-2020). His follow-on assignment after company command was Advanced Civil Schooling. He attended Texas A&M University as a graduate student in the College of Education and Human Development. MAJ Ritchey then served at the United States Military Academy at West Point as an Assistant Professor, Executive Officer, Instructor, and NCAA DIV I Volunteer Assistant Coach (2021-2024).

MAJ Ritchey deployed to Kuwait in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM – Spartan Shield.

MAJ Ritchey's military training includes the Sapper Leader Course, Special Forces Underwater Operations Combat Diver Qualification Course, Army Mountain Warfare School, Air Assault School, Master Fitness Trainer, Combatives Level 1, Observer Controller Trainer Academy, and Environmental Protection Officer.

MAJ Ritchey's awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal (two Oak Leaf Clusters), Army Commendation Medal (two Oak Leaf Clusters), Army Achievement Medal (three Oak Leaf Clusters), National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Sapper Tab, Special Operations Combat Diver Badge, Air Assault Badge, and German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge – Gold.

MAJ Ritchey is blessed with a wife, Kamiko, and three children who love spending time with family and friends, especially at the beach or pool. They are grateful and excited be a part of the Walla Walla community!

# Guest Speaker



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of Engineers®

## Deputy District Commander

**Lt. Col. David Weart**

Lt. Col. David Weart assumed duties as the deputy commander for the Portland District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineer in July 2024. His responsibilities include supporting the commander in overseeing a workforce of 1,500 federal employees in Oregon and southwestern Washington.

Weart graduated from the United States Military Academy in 2008 with a Bachelor of Science degree. He also holds a Masters of Science from Missouri University of Science and Technology, a Masters of Arts in Social-Organizational Psychology, and a Masters of Military Operations from the Army's Command and General Staff College. Weart is also a certified project management professional and is a U.S. Green Building Council LEED Green Associate.



Weart's previous assignments include: platoon leader and staff officer with 4th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, GA which included a deployment in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn. In 2013, Weart was assigned to the 11<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion at Fort Benning (now Fort Moore), GA where he served as the battalion logistics officer and company commander.

Following command, Weart attended graduate school with a utilization assignment as a company tactical officer and assistant operations officer for the United States Corps of Cadets, U.S. Military Academy. Following Command and General Staff College, Weart assumed duties as the squadron operations officer and executive officer, Regimental Engineer Squadron, Second Cavalry Regiment. Before arriving at the Portland District, Weart served as the engineer requirements integration officer for the Futures and Concepts Center, Army Futures Command.

Weart is a recipient of the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, and the Humanitarian Service Medal.



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of Engineers®

## Major Joseph F. O'Donnell

Maj. Joseph F. O'Donnell serves as the Seattle District Deputy Commander and helps manage a team of about 900 employees who undertake military construction in Washington, Idaho, Montana and Oregon; and are responsible for an extensive civil works Engineering and construction mission in Washington, Idaho and Montana. The district's programs also include preservation of historic structures, and hazardous, toxic and radioactive waste cleanup. Seattle District manages nearly \$1 billion worth of work annually. He is a licensed Professional Engineer in the state of Missouri, and a licensed Project Management Professional.



Maj. Joseph O'Donnell is from Eatontown, New Jersey. He received his commission from the University of Pittsburgh ROTC Program in 2010. His previous assignments include: Operations Officer, 46th Engineer Battalion, Fort Johnson, Louisiana; Small Group Leader, Engineer Captain's Career Course, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; Alpha Company Commander and Battalion Sustainment Officer, 14th Engineer Battalion, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington; Operations Officer, Pittsburgh District, US Army Corps of Engineers; and Company Executive Officer, 687th Horizontal Construction Company, 46th Engineer Battalion, Fort Polk.

Maj. O'Donnell earned a Bachelor of Science degree majoring in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Pittsburgh, a Masters of Engineering Management from the University of Missouri Science and Technology, and a Masters of Operational Science from the Command and General Staff College. His military education includes the Engineer Basic Officer Leader's Course and Captain's Career Course, and the US Army Command and General Staff College. MAJ O'Donnell's awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal (1 OLC) the Army Commendation Medal (4 OLC) the Army Achievement Medal (3 OLC) National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the Army Service Ribbon.

# Guest Speaker



® U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
**Colonel Rick Childers P.E, PMP**

Director, Sentinel Integrated Program Management Office  
Northwestern Division



Colonel Rick Childers is the Director of the Sentinel Integrated Project Management Office (IPMO) part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Northwestern Division. The Sentinel IPMO provides program management of both traditional and non-traditional Military Construction (MILCON), real estate acquisition, engineering design and construction contract oversight for the Sentinel Weapon System Replacement Program in support of the U.S Air Force Civil Engineering Center (AFCEC), and the U.S Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center (AFNWC). COL Childers hails from Port St. Lucie, Florida and was commissioned into the U.S. Army as an Engineer Officer following graduation from Georgia Military College 1999.

COL Childers previous assignments include: Mechanized Platoon Leader, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment, Georgia Army National Guard; Company Executive Officer, Assistant Operation Officer and Battalion Civil Engineer, 62nd Engineer Battalion, Fort Hood, TX; Assistant Brigade Logistics Officer, Company Commander, 14th Engineer Battalion, 555th Engineer Brigade, Fort Lewis, WA; Science & Technology Staff Officer, Army Capabilities Integration Center, Headquarters Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Eustis VA; Battalion Executive Officer, 2nd Battalion, 39th Infantry Regiment and Brigade Operations Officer (S-3) 165th Infantry Regiment, Fort Jackson, SC; Task Force Engineer, Joint Task Force Bravo, U.S. SOUTHCOM, Soto Cano Airbase Honduras; Deputy Commander, Tulsa District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tulsa, OK, District Commander, Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla, WA, District Commander, Transatlantic Expeditionary District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Camp Arifjan, Kuwait and most recently as the Chief of Operations, America's First Corps and Joint Base Lewis-McChord, JBLM, WA.

COL Childers earned a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering from Mercer University in 2002. In 2008, he was awarded a Master of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Missouri-Rolla. He is a licensed Professional Engineer in Missouri and a Certified Project Management Professional.

COL Childers military education includes studies at the United States Army Command and General Staff college, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, and the Engineer Officer Basic and Career Courses, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

His awards and decorations include: Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal (2 awards), Meritorious Service Medal (4 awards), Army Commendation Medal (2 awards), Army Achievement Medal (4 awards), and the Afghanistan and Iraq and Operation Inherent Resolve Campaign medals. He earned the Combat Action Badge and Parachutist Badge. He is also the recipient of the Bronze Order of de Fleury Medal from the Army Engineer Association.

His operational deployments include Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2005 and 2008; Operation Enduring Freedom in 2012 and Operation Inherent Resolve in 2023.

Colonel Childers and his wife Camellia have one son, Hunter (20) and one daughter, Kendall (18).

# Guest Speaker



## **Desiree Albrecht** **Business Opportunity Specialist**

*USACE Office of  
Small Business Programs*

Desiree Albrecht is a Business Opportunity Specialist for the U.S. Small Business Administration, Seattle District Office. She has been with SBA for 10 years helping connect small businesses with the right resources at the right time to start, grow and expand their business. Prior to joining SBA, Desiree worked for the Texas Board of Nursing. Desiree is also a veteran having served in the Minnesota National Guard with a deployment to Iraq in 2004. Desiree has a Bachelors of Business Administration in Human Resource Management from Texas A&M University – Central Texas and is currently working towards completing her MBA.





## Community Mission

The mission of the SAME Small Business Community of interest is to promote the role and relevance of small business in SAME through outreach, training, opportunity and recognition.



Small business firms contribute approximately **80** percent of our nation's job growth. Our entrepreneurial approach fosters innovation, drive, and success. Often considered "renegades," we are an invaluable asset to our nation's economy and the military mission.

The SAME Small Business Community of Interest (COI) is committed to keeping SAME Members informed with the most up-to-date information from the world of small business. We regularly send out an electronic newsletter to help you stay ahead of the latest trends and take advantage of current developments in growth and partnerships.

## Objectives of the Small Business Council

- Inform SAME of technical programs of interest to small business members
- Provide opportunities to meet with key military decision makers
- Represent small business interests on select SAME national committees
- Keep members informed on small business regulations and legislation
- Provide opportunities to highlight small business success stories and lessons learned

Interested in getting more information about Small Business Community activities or serving on the SAME Small Business COI Steering Committee?

### SB COI Website:

[Small Business Council - SAME](#)

### Contact us and get involved!

**Sally Clark**  
**Small Business COI Chair**  
**[CPSMsclark@afgcm.com](mailto:CPSMsclark@afgcm.com)**  
**(301) 602-9886**



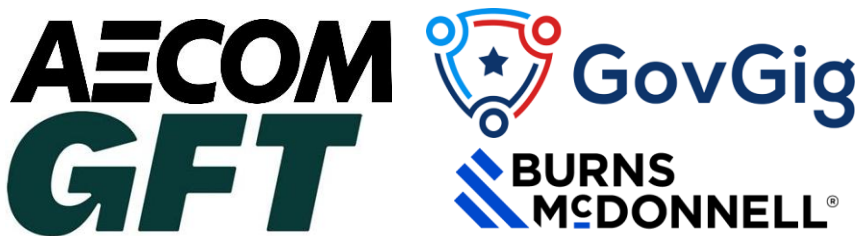
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SAME Northwest Region Small Business Symposium & Meet the Chiefs—where Government and Industry come together to share priorities, strengthen partnerships, and shape what's next. Through open dialogue, meaningful collaboration, and direct engagement with federal leaders and District Chiefs, we align strategies to deliver smarter, more resilient solutions. This combined event positions small businesses and industry partners to anticipate upcoming opportunities—and deliver them, together.

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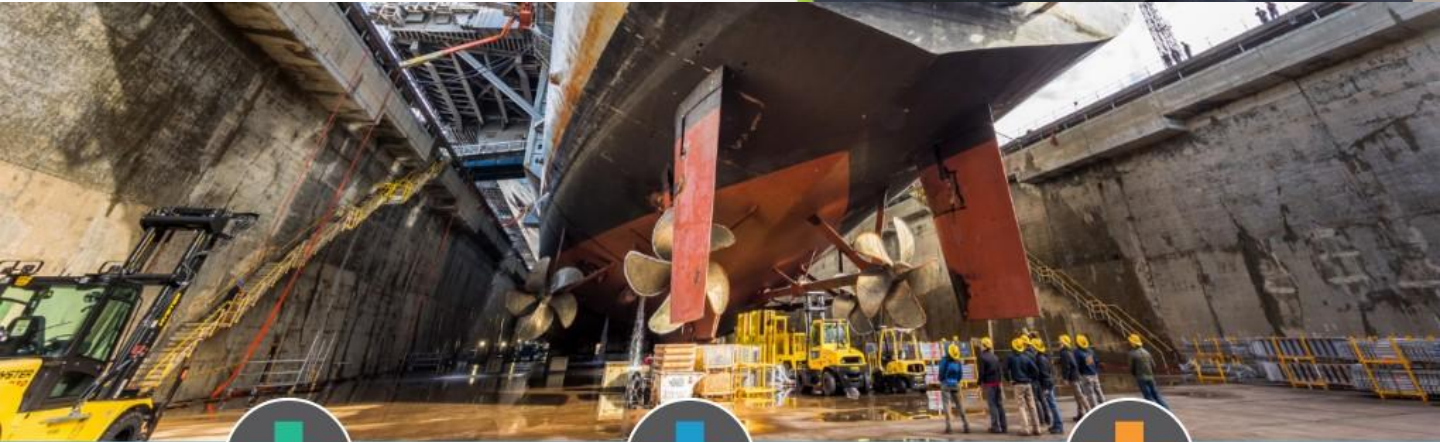
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## Our Mission

Build leaders and lead collaboration among government and industry to develop multidisciplinary solutions to national security infrastructure challenges.

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## CONTACT:



**Sal Nodjomian**

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## **REGIONAL UPCOMING EVENTS**

Event – Mount Tacoma Post Young Professionals and Young at Heart  
Social Hour Trivia Night

Date – 29 April 2026, 6pm

Location – Sig Brewing, Tacoma, WA

Event – Portland Post SAME Golf Tournament

Date/Time – 18 May 2026

Location – Heron Lakes Golf Club - Portland, OR

## **SAME NATIONAL UPCOMING EVENTS**

Event – Joint Engineer Training Conference

Date – 19-21 May 2026

Location – Portland, Oregon

# Sponsor Directory

## **Moffatt & Nichol** **Platinum Sponsor**

POC: J Roy  
Email: jroy@moffattnichol.com



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## **Stantec** **Platinum Sponsor**

POC: Bob Schlesinger  
Email: bob.schlesinger@stantec.com



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## **Shive-Hattery** **Platinum**

POC: Greg Kohout  
POC: gkohout@shive-hattery.com



Shive-Hattery provides architecture, engineering, and environmental services to public and private clients nationwide. The firm supports infrastructure, buildings, and federal programs through integrated solutions.

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POC: James Fentress  
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Email: amanda.loeffert@mbakerintl.com



Michael Baker International provides engineering, planning, and consulting services across transportation and federal markets. The firm supports defense and civilian agencies with mission-driven solutions.

## **Parsons** **Platinum Sponsor**

POC: Shawn Seaford  
Email: shawn.seaford@parsons.com



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POC: Kim Baker  
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P2S provides engineering and construction management services focused on powering mission readiness for federal facilities. The firm supports military and civilian agencies with resilient energy and infrastructure solutions.

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POC: Julio Iguina  
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POC: Richard Sevigny  
Email: rjs@rjsconstr.com



RJS Construction Inc. provides construction services with a focus on federal and public sector projects. The firm supports government clients through design-build and construction delivery.

## **WSP** **Gold Sponsor**

POC: Chuck Harris  
Contact: chuck.harris@wsp.com



WSP is a leading professional services firm providing engineering, advisory, and program management services. The firm supports clients across transportation, infrastructure, energy, water, and environmental sectors.

# Sponsor Directory

## AECOM

### Silver Sponsor

POC: Mike Saum

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AECOM delivers infrastructure and environmental services to support mission-critical programs. The firm has partnered with federal agencies for more than a century.

## GovGig

### Silver Sponsor

POC: Luke Swanson

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GovGig supports organizations competing in the federal marketplace through market intelligence and capture resources. The company focuses on helping firms navigate government contracting.

## Burns & McDonnell

### Silver Sponsor

POC: Luis Olvera

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Burns & McDonnell is a full-service engineering, architecture, construction, and consulting firm. The company serves public and private sector clients nationwide.

## GFT

### Silver Sponsor

POC: Kyle Chafin

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GFT provides engineering, environmental, and construction management services to public and private sector clients. The firm supports infrastructure and facilities projects nationwide.

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### Lanyard Sponsor

POC: Fred Barker

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Coffman Engineers is a multidiscipline engineering firm offering integrated design services across the United States. The firm supports public, private, and federal clients.

## Tetra Tech Inc.

### WiFi Sponsor

POC: Renee Vandermause

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Tetra Tech provides consulting and engineering services focused on water, environment, infrastructure, and sustainable solutions. The firm supports public and federal clients worldwide.

## MAKERS

### Small Business Sponsor

POC: Andy F.

Email: [andyf@makersarch.com](mailto:andyf@makersarch.com)



MAKERS architecture and urban design is an owner-operated small business with extensive Department of Defense planning experience. The firm supports federal facility planning and design.

## Blue Trident:

### Small Business Sponsor

POC: Emmanuel Bautista

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Blue Trident is an SBA-certified SDVOSB and 8(a) firm providing engineering and construction services. The firm supports federal clients nationwide.

## Akana

### Small Business Sponsor

POC: Ken Valder

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Akana provides management consulting and technical services to federal agencies. The firm supports strategy, program management, and operational improvement.







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