

SMPS

# pipeline

THE LATEST INFORMATION FROM SMPS CHICAGO

Fall 2015



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SMPS



# president's letter

**Nikki Dvorak**, President, SMPS Chicago Chapter

I've spent a great deal of time over the past few weeks thinking about SMPS and my vision for the 2015-16 year. In the process, I find that I am repeatedly reminded of all of the wonderful people that have helped get me to a point where I'm now able to add President to my list of accomplishments. As I look towards the year ahead, I realize that my journey here started with one very important person that introduced me to SMPS Chicago several years ago and it truly kick-started my career. Not only did this mentor believe in me, he believed in me just enough to where I started to believe in myself. For that, I'm forever grateful. SMPS Chicago introduced me to people with a deep knowledge of this industry, a collection of geniuses that I am honored to be surrounded by and call my friends. My SMPS connections offer a wealth of knowledge and I continue to soak up all that I can. As I started to get more involved in SMPS over the past several years, I started to find my place in my career. Industry folks were eager to take meetings with me even before I had an agenda – they were just happy to share their experiences and answer any questions I had with passion and excitement. That willingness to help me succeed is exactly what drove me to want to learn more about SMPS Chicago and how I can help others do the same.

For our 2015-16 program year, this is what I want to bring back to SMPS Chicago; passion and excitement. This is an amazing organization. We are an impressive collection of knowledge, insights, and connections. As the new year begins, I'm so excited to join in sharing our more seasoned members' trials and tribulations with our new members in hopes that all involved will continue to learn and grow. I want our millennials to share stories with our veterans and see all of the new ideas and solutions we

can create. The sky is the limit this year and as your President, I couldn't be more thrilled about it. I'm honored and excited to work alongside an amazing board this year; a board that is already brainstorming ideas we haven't seen in recent years. I am also thrilled to welcome Pam O'Deen-Pishler, CPSM, of Mortenson Construction back to the board. Pam will serve as our Past President/Advisor. Throughout her career, she has amassed a long list of accomplishments. With the addition of Pam's experience, knowledge and leadership to this year's already robust board, SMPS Chicago will no doubt thrive. We are all here to do a job, learn, make connections, and have a good time doing it. I want to make sure SMPS Chicago is the ultimate platform for that.

As I start my journey as your President, my thanks begin with that very important person I mentioned above. Matt Rebro, CPSM, ASI Signage Innovations, showed me what it was like to be a leader, a team player, and a friend. Matt served as SMPS Chicago President in 2012. As many of you know, Matt and I worked together at that time. I watched and learned from someone I deem to be the very best, and the best is what I'm going to give back to SMPS Chicago. I look forward to growing with all of you in the year ahead.

Nikki Dvorak  
Business Development Leader  
DLR Group

# CHICAGO CHAPTER new members

Welcome to SMPS Chicago!



**Stefany Adholekar**

Marketing Editor, STV Inc.

**Erin M. Athas**

Manager of Marketing and Government Relations,  
Knight E/A, Inc.

**Neal Benish, PE, SE, LEED AP**

Associate, Wallace Engineering

**Jessi M. Block**

Marketing Manager, INVISION Architecture

**Elizabeth Brennan**

Marketing Manager, VOA Associates, Inc.

**Sarah E. Brewster**

Marketing Associate, Shen Milsom & Wilke LLC

**Joshua S. Crankshaw**

Production Coordinator, McShane Companies

**Matthew Dvorak**

Director of Marketing & Communications, Primera Engineers

**Liz M. Frankenbach**

Office Manager/Marketing Coordinator,  
Shive-Hattery Architecture Engineering

**Matthew Gillis**

Marketing Coordinator, FGM Architects Inc.

**Jennifer Graham**

Business Development/Marketing Director,  
Planning Resources Inc.

**Lindsay Green**

Marketing Coordinator, Project Management Advisors

**Lauren Haras**

Sr. Marketing Communication & Brand,  
International Interior Design Association

**Robert Hollis**

VP Sales & Marketing, Kluber A + E

**Brenda Jentink, IIDA, EDAC**

Business Development Specialist, PFB Architects LLC

**Afra A. Lucas**

Marketing and Business Development Manager,  
Baumann Consulting

**Jack Macintosh**

Business Development, SUMAC

**Mike Mattio**

Sales, Best Imaging Solutions

**Maggie Moller**

Marketing Coordinator, The Weitz Company

**Jessie Mumgaard**

Sr. Marketing Coordinator, Pepper Construction

**Caroline Munzel**

Marketing Coordinator, W.E. O'Neil

**Joel P. Mynsberge**

Marketing Coordinator, Earles Architects & Associates

**Stevie L. Reynolds**

Operations and Brand Manager, KOO LLC

**Gregg Rosen**

Director, Business Development, The Walsh Group

**Megha Shah**

Director, Strategic Accounts, VOA Associates, Inc.

**Shreena K. Shah**

Marketing Coordinator, Project Management Advisors, Inc.

**Laura Uhler**

Marketing Coordinator, The Walsh Group

**Korey Witalka**

Marketing Coordinator, Pepper Construction

## FEATURE ARTICLE

# SMPS Heartland Regional Conference – Fired Up for the Future

by Kristin Olsen-Whisler, RME  
Photos: Bob Elmore

After beating out eight other cities to host the event, the SMPS Chicago Chapter welcomed members and guests to the SMPS Heartland Regional Conference at the Palmer House hotel on May 6, 2015. Attendees arrived ready to 'Ignite their Career' and engage with seasoned A/E/C industry leaders and thought provoking speakers, as well as network among professionals from across the region.

For more than a year, conference Co-chairs Leann Dockins of KJWW Engineering, and Pam O'Deen-Pishler of Mortenson Construction, led the conference planning along with countless other helpful volunteers from Chicago and SMPS chapters across the U.S. Pam and Leann had a clear vision for the experience they wanted to create at this year's conference.

Leann Dockins had this to say about charting the course, "We wanted to provide conference attendees with valuable and tangible information that they could take back and share/ implement in their firms. We also wanted them to be able to feel refreshed and energized with new ideas that would 'Ignite their Career'."

Attendees benefited from a wide variety of presentations containing valuable long and short-term takeaways.

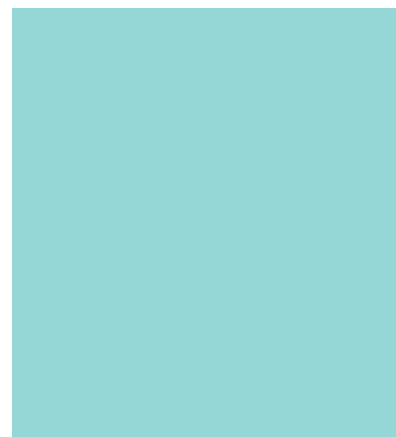
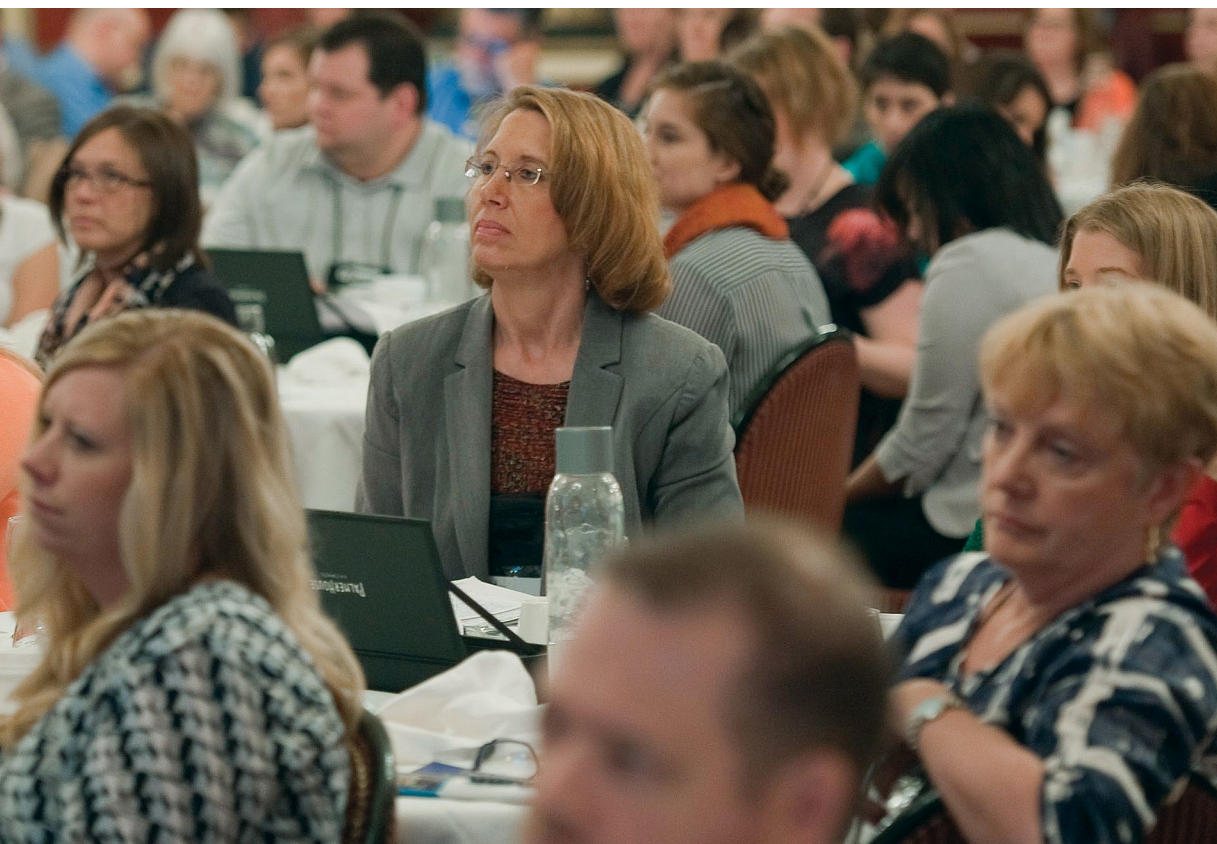
### Here are just a few examples to share:

"I felt that the 'Does Your Brand Deliver a Difference?' presentation by Wendy Nemitz brought a lot of good content to light. Her presentation spoke to me as a marketer, but also as a consumer. She really stressed the idea of focus groups or client interviews and how much we can learn from them. Our own customers and clients are a great source for a marketer that is sometimes overlooked. They are not only consuming our product or service, but consuming our marketing content as well, and we should take the time to gather their feedback and use it to our advantage," said an SMPS member.

"...whatever method you use to communicate, the bottom line is that you must know your audience. This was a common thread throughout the conference, whether it related to branding, proposal writing, presenting, storytelling. People buy from people. Potential clients want to know if you can solve their problem (know your audience) and, most importantly, they want to trust you enough to want to do business with you," Sally Draht of Positive Energy Practice commented.

"I found 'The Secrets to Telling a Compelling Story' stretched my thinking. Approaching the writing of proposal materials using the structure of a story is an appealing way to connect with clients/the reader and position your firm as the hero," remarked an SMPS member.





"I sat in on the 'Drive Performance to a Higher Level with Marketing Analytics' presentation by Chuck Roberts. Not only did it bring me back to college marketing classes, but it also made me think more about how ECS fits into the market as a consultant and a brand by completing a simple SWOT analysis to position ECS against our competitors. It has helped shape the way I talk about ECS to potential clients," said Jamie Zwierzynski of ECS Midwest, LLC.

"During 'Winning Proposals', Jim Rogers presented an interesting statistic – 80 percent of teams felt they delivered better than their competition—but only 8 percent of clients agreed. (Bain & Co.) It is another reminder of how essential tangible results are to demonstrate what makes each firm unique when pursuing new business. It also reinforced the importance of encouraging direct and honest client feedback at regular intervals, especially at the conclusion of each project," an SMPS member described.

While attendees found this year's Heartland Regional Conference provided practical work information, attendees also discovered useful career direction. One SMPS member commented, "The conference also gave me a lot of confidence to take charge of my career. There are opportunities all around us and it is possible to make a change for the better. Don't be afraid to reach for what you want."

"The conference gave me a lot of confidence to take charge of my career. There are opportunities all around us and it is possible to make a change for the better."

As announced in Chicago, the SMPS Heartland Regional Conference will find its home in Pittsburgh, PA in 2017. The chapter is honored to be the next host. After this year's conference, the bar has been set high. SMPS will issue the latest information regarding the next Heartland Regional Conference as soon as it becomes available.

To view all conference presentations, please visit:  
[www.smpsheartland.org/presentations](http://www.smpsheartland.org/presentations).



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

# Marc Deneau

Vice President of Business Development, Henry Bros. Co.

### What are your main responsibilities at Henry Bros Company?

My primary responsibility is business development, pursuing and procuring work, predominantly in the public sector (K-12, higher education, parks and recreation, and municipalities). Once a new client is brought on board, my role is to maintain an open line of communication and ensure Henry Bros. Co. is meeting and exceeding their goals. I am also heavily involved in the marketing strategy of the firm and overseeing the RFP/RFQ functions.

### Why did you get involved with SMPS and how has it changed over the years?

I originally got involved in SMPS to gain a better understanding of the built environment and develop a core group of people that I could go to for guidance and in turn, begin my networking efforts. Over the past 20-something years, I have definitely seen changes and shifts in the organization and marketplace. When I first got involved in SMPS it was a very exciting time. Part of that might have been my newness to the industry. The functions I attended always seemed to hold my interest, more heavily on the business development side. There were a lot of senior (I am now dating myself) people always in attendance. Many of those members, such as Mary Jo Graff, Dale Jones, and Sandy Wright, were big influences to me. I have seen shifts between marketing and business development programs over the last few years. I think the organization has made a great effort in trying to meet both of those interests.

### How did you get your start in the A/E/C industry and any advice to those just starting in the industry?

I originally majored in architecture, and realized design was not my strong suit. I switched majors and got a B.A. in Marketing. With the assistance of two friends while working in another industry, I had an aha moment, “Even if I wasn’t an architect, maybe I still wanted to somehow be involved in the industry.” Now, here I am.

### What do you like to do for fun when you’re not working?

I enjoy golfing, music, reading, taking vacations, and an occasional cocktail and cigar.

### If you were a Super Hero, what super power would you like to have?

Ever since I was a kid, I always dreamed of being able to fly.

### What is your favorite place to eat in Chicago or the suburbs?

It’s hard to name just one, Libertad in Skokie, Star of Siam, and Frontera Grill, are a few of my favorites.

## SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

# Echo Design Group

responses by John Burton



ECHO DESIGN GROUP

### **Tell us briefly about your company and what you do**

We are a creative marketing agency that specializes in branding and web development. In essence, we help clients craft the right brand image and the right messaging across all their communication channels. Typically, we work with clients who are happy with their marketing team, but are concerned about the identity of their brand and website and are interested in ways to make their marketing much more competitive.

On the branding side, typical projects include logo development, corporate identity, newsletters, brochures, direct mail, print advertising, signage and trade show displays.

On the digital side, typical projects include web design and development, custom web applications, video development, interactive communications, email marketing, online advertising, SEO programs and SEM initiatives.

### **What is the biggest challenge you are facing in your position right now?**

Technology is moving at a brisk pace. Our biggest challenge is staying ahead of the curve so that we can consistently provide our clients with creative solutions that are forward thinking and progressive. That's a big part of the value we bring to the table for our clients.

### **What value has SMPS brought to your firm and you personally?**

SMPS has helped us connect with like-minded marketing professionals and has provided us with great insight into the challenges facing marketing professionals in the A/E/C industry.

### **What is the best part of being an SMPS sponsor and what do you find most valuable?**

We have really enjoyed working with SMPS Chicago and several of the SMPS Regional Conference Committees. It is a fantastic way to meet fellow SMPS Members, while giving the company a great deal of exposure and recognition. SMPS is so well organized and all the members are an absolute joy to work with. We are really impressed.

### **How do you work with SMPS members?**

At Echo, our clients find information and insight regarding their branding and web presence extremely helpful. Therefore, we often begin with an initial assessment of a company's brand and/or website. From there we work collaboratively with our clients to develop strategy, determine creative solutions and coordinate implementation.

SMPS Members can receive a free branding or website critique. Please call **(630) 300-3288** or visit our website at [echodesigngroup.com/web-dive](http://echodesigngroup.com/web-dive) for more information.

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