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## March Newsletter

This issue, we are honored to share a piece on our new Region 7 Governor, Molly Bennett, and a Society Award Winner, Christopher Neale.

For information on the Environmental Technical Meeting in March, please check on our website, Facebook and Twitter.

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Brandon Vacek, PE,  
M.ASCE

### From the President

Greetings Nebraska ASCE!

We are already a few months into the New Year. Time is just rapidly flying by. When this year started, I set myself up with a New Year's Resolution. Figured it would something to get me fired up and back into the "normal" swing of things. So far, I have been keeping up with it; but we shall see how it goes.

We are always trying to find new ways to kick off the new year with the "new year, new me" mantra. Be it different forms of physical fitness/health or other goals but I want to offer another option to you all. Get Involved. Find a way to be active in your workplace, your professional organization, your neighborhood, or other organizations. Whether you are donating your time, materials, or your expertise, it is always needed. There is never a wrong time to get involved and be a part of something.

The Nebraska Section of ASCE is always looking for new faces for our officers the board so if you wish to become more involved in our section or want to know more about our section, please reach out to myself or any of our officers/board members.

We have a few meetings and events lined up over the coming months and are looking forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

*Brandon Vacek*

Brandon Vacek, President, ASCE Nebraska Section

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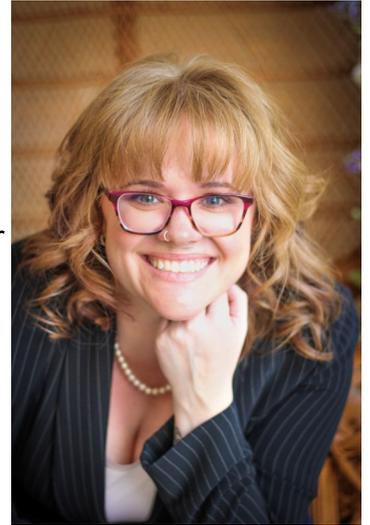
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## Introducing the Region 7 Governor, Molly Bennett

Molly Bennett attended the University of Wyoming and received a degree in Civil Engineering. Since graduating, she has worked in a variety of places beginning at a coal mine in Gillette, WY for two years. She operated as a mining engineer and provided elevation plans for the equipment (draglines and shovels) moving soil over the coal. Her favorite part of the job was the equipment, since it was so large. She then transitioned to a civil consulting firm out of Loveland, CO. She was a staff engineer working on various projects with municipalities. After that, Molly began a position with the Wyoming Department of Transportation . She worked in the bridge department and focused mostly on oversize, overweight loads and how they related to structures, bridges and culverts around Wyoming. She then moved on to the City of Cheyenne as a staff engineer and was involved with development reviews and coordinated the comments and reviews. The next opportunity came along and she moved to Laramie County Public Works (LCPW) as the Assistant Director. She spent a year and a half learning the operations of LCPW and getting to know the 45 employees. In May of 2021, she shifted to be the Director of the LCPW. She now manages the department's employees and operations.



Molly joined ASCE as a student at the university and pursued the role of Governor because she wanted to make an impact and support the state sections and students with ASCE. As a Governor, she hopes to focus on making the Nebraska Wyoming sections are supported



Above: Molly standing within a dragline bucket.

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## **2022 Royce J. Tipton Award Winner: Christopher Neale**

This month, we are excited to highlight a member of our society for winning the Royce J. Tipton Award. This award recognizes contributions to the advancement of irrigation and drainage engineering in teaching, research, planning, design, construction or management. Congratulations to Christopher Neale!

Christopher attended Colorado State University and graduated with an MS and PhD in Agricultural Engineering, with a focus on Irrigation Engineering. He joined ASCE because it had an active Irrigation and Drainage division at the time and many of his professors and peers were members. He has been actively involved within ASCE, serving on technical committees.

Christopher was born and raised in Brazil and attended a private engineering school in Sao Paulo, where he studied civil engineering. His first internship was at Themag Engenharia, a design engineering company involved in the design of several hydroelectric dams and powerplants in Brazil. His interest in agriculture led him to the US to study irrigation engineering since it combined his knowledge of engineering skills in the agricultural sector with his interest. During his PhD studies at CSU, he worked for a company that secured funding to conduct feasibility studies in the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica. This was where international consulting work permeated his career. While working as a professor at Utah State University, he was involved in several international projects. His favorite project was a large mapping project in the Dominican Republic where he served as project PI and Director. He lived in the DR one and half years to get the project off the ground. His project involved mapping all the irrigated parts of the country to create a GIS database. They developed the software and trained the newly formed water user associations (WUA) on how to use it. In 2014, he joined the Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute at the University of Nebraska to serve as the Director of Research. His experience has been rewarding as the institute grows and continues to do research.

When he isn't working on engineering projects Christopher spends his time playing guitar in a Brazilian Jazz band called Evening in Brazil. In 2019, they performed in Jazz in June, a local outdoor music event at University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

**Upcoming Events and Seminars**

Program	Full Dates	City/State
Environmental Technical Meeting	March TBD	Omaha, NE



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**2020-2021 NEASCE Officers**

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Brandon Vacek, P.E., M.ASCE  
Felsburg Holt & Ullevig  
402-455-4405  
Brandon.Vacek@fhueng.com

*President-Elect*

Garret Martindale, PE, M.ASCE  
HDR  
Garrett.Martindale@hdrinc.com

*Vice President*

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JEO  
aeisenbraun@jeo.com

*Past President*

Brandon Gardels, P.E., M.ASCE  
HDR  
402-399-1361  
Brandon.gardels@hdrinc.com

*Treasurer*

Greta Ehrhorn, E.I., A.M.ASCE  
Olsson  
gehrhorn@olsson.com

*Secretary*

Isabella Walsh, E.I., A.M.ASCE  
HDR  
402-392-8600  
Isabella.walsh@hdrinc.com

*Director*

Marie Stamm, P.E., M.ASCE  
The Schemmer Associates, Inc.  
402-493-4800  
marie.asce@gmail.com

*Director*

Mike Sklenar, PE, M.ASCE

**The Nebraska Civil Engineer**

c/o Sarah Hruby  
Olsson  
601 P St, #200  
Lincoln, NE 68508

Thank you to the businesses that support this  
newsletter through their contributions.

For underwriting information, contact Sarah  
Hruby, Newsletter Editor, at 531-365-4629 or  
shruby@olsson.com

Email articles to Sarah Hruby at shruby@olsson.com