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### 2021-2022

### San Diego Section Officers

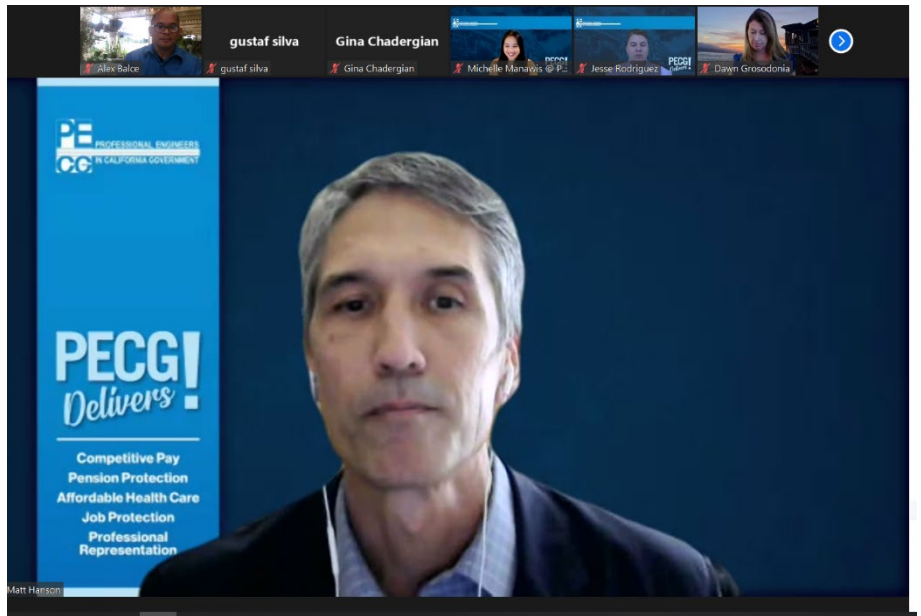
Section Director: Oscar Cortes  
Section President: Frank Contreras  
President Elect: Alex Balce  
VP Supervisory: Abu-Bakr Al-Jafri  
VP Rank & File: Ryan Fallica  
VP At Large: Stewart Migdal  
Secretary: Ron Palo  
Treasurer: Roy Flores

### PECG Member Recruiting is Rewarding!

- Recruitment Tools:  
<http://pecg.org/recruitment-tools/>
- To join:  
<http://pecg.org/join-pecg/>
- Rewards:  
\$50 per rank-and-file employee  
\$200 per supervisor/manager

## SD Section Meeting HELD!

May 20, 2022



PECG SD Section Guest Speaker Matt Hanson

San Diego PECG chapter successfully held a Section meeting on May 20 with 135 members in attendance. The highlight of the meeting was the unanimous approval of the proposal to amend the Bylaws to allow for electronic voting in the coming PECG Section officers elections. Important information for pay raises, geo-pay, parental leave and telework stipend were discussed by the section meeting guest speaker Matt Hanson. He also discussed the PECG bargaining process to get all these important issues to the bargaining committee with involvement of different agencies for negotiation, ratification and eventually for legislative approval. Matt and Cristina Nunez elaborated on how all these issues are being tackled with CALHR and pushed in the bargaining process and reiterated the importance of member participation in the surveys to get all input evaluated and analyzed. A \$15 gift card will be sent out to members who attended in lieu of lunch.

# PECG Weekly Updates

May 6, 2022

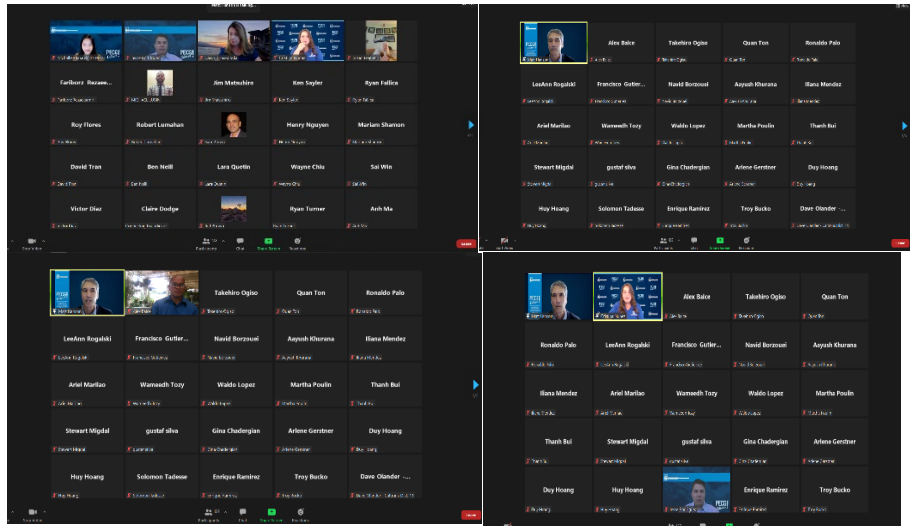
Many Unit 9 agencies and departments have announced that they will have a leave buy-back program this year. PECG's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Article 5.19 authorizes Unit 9 employees to cash out up to 80 hours of accumulated Vacation or Annual Leave each year if their department determines it has funds available to make the payments. On or before May 1 each year, under the terms of the MOU, each department is supposed to notify employees if the Vacation/Annual Leave cash out will be available. If so, the departments must also let employees know how many hours they can cash out, not to exceed the 80-hour maximum.

Just as a reminder, Personal Leave Program (PLP) 2020 hours are not eligible to be cashed out under the leave buy-back program.

So far, we have confirmation that Caltrans, Waterboards, CARB, DWR, Parks and CalFIRE have authorized employees (rank and file and supervisors and managers) to cash out up to the full Vacation/Annual Leave 80-hour limit. CHP and CDPH have authorized up to 40 hours. CalRecycle and DCA are not participating.

In the days ahead, PECG will let you know what other departments are participating this year and how many hours they are allowing Unit 9 employees to cash out.

Under the leave buy-back program, Unit 9 employees who wish to take advantage of the opportunity must submit a request form during the month of May to cash out a portion of their Vacation or Annual Leave. Payments are to be issued by



Screen shot of SD Section meeting with attendees

## PECG Represented!



Shown in photo from left; Roy Flores SD PECG Treasure, Ryan Fallica SD PECG VP R&F, Assembly member Chris Ward AD78 and SD PECG President Frank Contreras

PECG is proud to support individuals and organizations that advocate efforts focused on housing, homelessness, economic development, and the environment. Assemblymember (AD 78) Chris Ward is one of the

departments in June. Please keep in mind that the cashed-out leave is taxable.

*April 29, 2022*

With just two months left in the 2021-22 fiscal year, it is a good time to remind PECG members about PECG MOU Article 5.15 (Professional Leave). Per Article 5.15, each fiscal year (which ends on June 30), all Unit 9 employees can request 16 hours (without loss of compensation) of leave for professional growth activity “at the employee’s discretion,” which “shall be requested and approved in the same manner as vacation/annual leave.” However, Professional Leave does not accumulate from year to year. It must be used by June 30 each year, or it will be forfeited. If you have not already done so, please make a plan to utilize your 16 hours of Professional Leave before it goes away on June 30. For the full details, read MOU Article 5.15 here.

*April 22, 2022*

Just a reminder that PECG offers discounted group plan life insurance coverage for PECG members and their dependents. Due to group rates, plan features are better and the cost is lower than most other individual or group plans.

PECG members are automatically covered for \$5,000 life insurance and \$1,500 accidental death and dismemberment coverage as a benefit of membership at no cost. Members have the option to purchase up to an additional \$521,000 in life insurance, and up to \$255,000 in dependent coverage. The low monthly premiums (taken through

few individuals PECG supports. He served on the San Diego City Council, focusing his efforts on housing, homelessness, economic development, and the environment, and authored San Diego’s landmark Equal Pay Ordinance, as well as enacted a local ordinance to make San Diego the largest city in California to ban Styrofoam and reduce single-use plastics. Assemblymember Ward recently held a fundraiser at the Prado Restaurant in Balboa Park which was also attended by SD PECG officers to represent the section.



*Shown in photo from left: Assembly member Chris Ward AD78, Ryan Fallica SD PECG VO R&F and Tasha Boerner Horvath Assembly member AD 76*

In related topic, Ryan Fallica (SD PECG VP R&F) represented SD PECG in the Tasha Boerner Horvath (AD 76 Incumbent, Running in AD 77) Fundraiser at Stone Liberty Station in Point Loma within San Diego on March 31, 2022. Quite number of participants attended the event – including reps from the Operators Union (I.U.O.E. Local 12), San Diego Building Trades & Construction Trades Council and the Association of California State Supervisors. It was a casual event with personal anecdotes and talk of the importance of this election season. Asm Boerner Horvath, the appointed Chair for the Assembly Committee on Arts, Entertainment, Sports, Tourism, & Internet Media was introduced by Mark West (Fmr. Imperial Beach City Council) and Chris Ward (AD 78), who lauded her achievements and passion for public service. The event lasted about two hours and a good time was had by all.

payroll deduction) offer members an opportunity to provide security for their family members easily and affordably.

The PECG package of insurance benefits includes coverage for dependent children, accidental death and dismemberment, and long-term disability.

If you would like to learn more about PECG's life or other insurance benefits, please email PECG's insurance administrator at [insurance@pecg.org](mailto:insurance@pecg.org) or visit the PECG webpage [here](#).

### *April 1, 2022*

In the media and meetings, PECG continues to urge state departments to implement permanent telework policies that allow Unit 9 employees to telework "to the fullest extent possible" with telework determinations made "on a case-by-case basis, related to specific jobs and duties" of each employee, per state policy.

PECG was featured in a Sacramento Bee story pointing out that state employees have teleworked successfully over the last two years and setting mandatory days in the office without demonstrating any operational need is not necessary to deliver for California taxpayers.

PECG President Cameron Knudson's article California should embrace telework for state employees that appeared last week in CalMatters, an influential news outlet covering state politics.

In it, Knudson "urges decision-makers at all levels of state government to stay true to the administration's stated objectives – provide telework opportunities to as many employees as possible to reduce carbon emissions and congestion, save money by downsizing office space, and improve

# PECG Helps The Environment

April 22, 2022

Earth Day was on April 22, where PECG participated in the celebration environmental protection and resource conservation to remind ourselves of the importance of a healthy Earth to all the species that inhabit it. This year's theme is Invest in Our Planet and PECG members in District 11 who have dedicated their careers to creating a safer, cleaner, and more livable planet volunteered and participated to the annual Coastal Cleanup.



In related news prior to the April 22 Earth Day, PECG initiated the

productivity and service to the public.”

He also urged the state to avoid the “slide back toward an outdated, inefficient, butts-in-seats business model” by “ordering employees back to the office by April 1 for two, three and four days a week without identifying any operational need for the mandate.” Please read the complete article here.

PECG will continue to advocate in all venues, including the media, that state departments live up to the spirit and intent of the permanent statewide telework policy. Specifically, that state employees shall be allowed to telework “to the fullest extent possible” and decisions on telework “should be addressed on a case-by-case basis, related to specific jobs and duties” and not arbitrary return to work orders for a certain number of days each week that do not serve any operational need or objective.

If your department or office has adopted, or is considering, a permanent telework policy mandating that employees return to work a specific number of days each week – and has put the plan in writing – please share that information with PECG. That will help us make the case to the Newsom Administration and state departments that this approach is not consistent with the statewide telework policy established last October.

*March 18, 2022*

The PECG Bargaining Team met this week to review the latest comprehensive bargaining survey results and the additional comments submitted by PECG members who recently completed the survey. To date, 3,613 rank and file PECG members (41% of rank-and-file

establishment of the PECG Climate Change Committee to advocate and support policies that reduce GHG emissions and guarantee equitable pay in jobs aligned to clean energy industries. PECG At-Large VP Stuart Migdal was one of the attendees along with other members from different PECG chapters in the launched team that helped set the scope and priorities for the committee. One particular topic that was discussed in the initial meeting was the issue of connecting telework to reducing carbon emissions by bringing down the number of vehicles on the streets that translate to decrease reliance on fossil fuels. The committee will further explore the opportunities to connect climate benefits to an issue that PECG members are supportive of.

## IN THE NEWS

### CALTRANS Honors 189 Fallen Highway Workers at Memorial

*April 29, 2022*



Source: CALTRANS

Caltrans dignitaries, employees, families and friends gathered solemnly on the west steps of the State Capitol on Thursday for the department’s 32nd annual Workers Memorial to remember and honor

members) have completed the survey with nearly 1,000 members submitting comments with specific bargaining suggestions. The survey and comments help to establish the priorities of the PEGC team as it negotiates with CalHR (representing the Governor's Administration) on the next PEGC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The current MOU expires on July 1, 2022.

The Bargaining Team also decided that the bargaining survey will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, March 25, 2022 – one week from today. If you have not done so already, please take a few minutes to fill out the survey and share your bargaining perspective.

If you did not receive a survey via email or lost or deleted it, please let us know by replying to this message. In some cases, members report that it is not possible to access the online survey via a state computer. In these instances, PEGC recommends that you forward the survey to your personal computer to respond.

For now, PEGC's comprehensive Supervisors and Managers Pay and Benefits Survey remains open. To date, over 500 PEGC-member supervisors and managers – 29% of the supervisory and managerial membership – have responded. PEGC negotiates salary, benefits, and working conditions for Unit 9 supervisors and managers with CalHR through the meet and confer process. The PEGC Meet and Confer Team, made up of your fellow supervisors from around the state, will use the survey results to establish its own pay and benefit objectives for Unit 9 supervisors and managers. If you are a PEGC supervisory or managerial member, and have yet to

the 189 public servants who have died since 1921 while building and maintaining California's transportation system.

The yearly memorial — in addition to honoring families and giving staff the opportunity to pay respects to their fallen colleagues — reminds us to “Be Work Zone Alert” and “Move Over” a lane when you see flashing amber lights ahead, or slow down if not safe to do so.

“Safety is always Caltrans’ top priority and the tragedies that brought us here today have resulted in intensified safety efforts within the department,” said Caltrans Acting Director Steven Keck. “Zero deaths on our state highway system is the only acceptable number, and as we recognize those who tragically died while at work on our transportation system we remind all motorists to please Slow for the Cone Zone, Be Work Zone Alert and Move Over when you see flashing amber lights.”

During the ceremony, Caltrans placed 189 orange traffic cones in a diamond "caution sign" configuration, each bearing the name of an employee lost since 1921.

A black cone in the center represented all people killed while working on the state highway system, including private contractors, tow truck drivers, California Highway Patrol officers and other emergency responders.

The commemoration also included the Caltrans Honor Guard, who led the symbolic tribute. Additionally, flags are flying at half-staff today at the State Capitol and at all Caltrans facilities in honor of these fallen workers.

Thursday's ceremony marked the third year in a row that no new names were added to the memorial the longest stretch in nearly 75 years though speakers at the memorial stressed the need for everyone to remain vigilant.

With the help of Senate Bill 1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017, as well as the recently enacted federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Caltrans and local agencies now have significant additional funds to repair and maintain California's transportation system.

The additional funding also increases the number of Caltrans employees and contractors working on our roadways, increasing their exposure. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, highway construction and maintenance work is one of the most hazardous occupations in the United States. In 2020, more than 6,500 work zone collisions occurred on California roadways, resulting in an estimated 1,964 injuries and 60 fatalities.

complete the survey, please take the time to do so now.

As noted above, if you're a PEGC supervisory or managerial member, and did not receive the survey via email or lost or deleted it, please let us know by replying to this message. And if you have trouble accessing the online survey via a state computer, please forward it to your personal computer to respond.

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*March 4, 2022*

Given the recent retirement of Unit 9 senior staff in nearly every department, many PEGC members have had to temporarily assume the duties and responsibilities of higher classifications. If that is your circumstance, you should be aware of Article 6.1 Out-of-Classification Assignments in the PEGC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Article 6.1 is designed to compensate employees for performing the duties of a higher classification.

If you spend, or have spent, more than 50% of your time performing the full range of duties of a higher classification, you can be compensated an additional 5% during that time, or the difference between your salary and the salary of the higher classification at the same step, depending on how long you perform the work. You can earn up to one year of out-of-class compensation and use the verified out-of-class experience to qualify for promotional exams.

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*February 25, 2022*

Many PEGC members have asked recently about the status of premium or hazard pay for Unit 9 employees who

Nationally, drivers and passengers account for 85 percent of the people who are killed in work zones. In February, Caltrans announced a new Director's Policy on Road Safety, which commits the department to the Safe System approach and reaffirms the vision of reaching zero fatalities and serious injuries on state highways by 2050. This policy takes steps to further a shift that began in 2020, as state transportation leaders recognized a bolder and more focused approach was necessary to combat the troubling rise in fatalities and serious injuries on California roads.

The state's 2020-24 Strategic Highway Safety Plan managed by Caltrans and involving more than 400 stakeholders was updated to include the Safe System approach.

Caltrans has partnered with the California Transportation Foundation to develop two funds to benefit the families of Caltrans workers killed on the job.

The Fallen Workers Assistance and Memorial Fund helps with the initial needs a surviving family faces and the Caltrans Fallen Workers Memorial Scholarship is available to the children of these workers.

For more information or to make donations, visit the [California Transportation Foundation](https://www.caltransfoundation.org/).

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## High-Speed Rail Between San Jose, Central Valley Receives Final EIR Certification

CBS San Francisco

April 28, 2022



have continued to work in the field during the pandemic. Just as a reminder, nearly a year ago, PEGC specifically requested that the State provide Unit 9 employees working in the field with premium pay from the federal funds provided specifically for this purpose.

In that April 2021 letter, PEGC's President and Bargaining Team Chair urged the State to "dedicate a portion of the federal funding provided in the American Rescue Plan to issue premium pay to state-employed engineers and related professionals who have continued to perform essential, critical infrastructure duties in the field during the pandemic in service to all Californians."

"State-employed engineers and related professionals who have performed critical work in the field during the pandemic clearly fall within the category of employees who are the intended recipients of premium pay."

"At risk to their own health, from the start of the pandemic, Unit 9 employees at Caltrans, Department of Water Resources, State Water Resources Control Board, California Air Resources Board, Department of Industrial Relations, Department of Conservation, Division of State Architect, Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, and many other state departments have been in the field overseeing the construction and/or inspecting state highways, bridges, water projects, local water treatment facilities, sources of greenhouse gas emissions, energy production, schools, and hospitals, to name a few of their vital duties. Unit 9 employees have also inspected thousands of workplaces to protect employees from COVID-19 and other work-related threats." Please read the complete letter [here](#).

*Artist's rendering of California High-Speed Rail segment through Pacheco Pass east of Gilroy. CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY*

**SAN JOSE** - High-speed rail between San Jose and the Central Valley took a step closer to becoming reality after the final environmental impact report was certified Thursday. In a unanimous vote, the High-Speed Rail Authority Board of Directors approved the 90-mile section stretching from Diridon Station in San Jose to Merced.

"Today's approval represents another major milestone and brings us one step closer to delivering high-speed rail between the Silicon Valley and the Central Valley," Authority CEO Brian Kelly said in a statement. "The Authority is poised to make the vision of high-speed rail in the Bay Area a reality." The approval moves the project closer to being "shovel ready" once funding becomes available, officials said. Currently, construction is underway between Madera County and Bakersfield in the Central Valley.

Once high-speed rail is complete between San Jose and Fresno, officials said the travel time between the two cities would be one hour, compared to three hours by car. "Completion of this critically important high-speed rail project helps the state expand economic opportunity and affordable housing, two critical goals for all of us," San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo said. In its decision, the board selected "Alternative 4" out of the four alignments studied. As part of the project, the existing rail corridor between San Jose and Gilroy would be electrified, allowing for both high-speed rail and Caltrain service.

From Gilroy, the rail line would head east into the Central Valley, with 15 miles of tunnels through the Pacheco Pass in the Diablo Range. "Next to San Jose, Gilroy will be the next most significant transit hub on this stretch," Gilroy Mayor Marie Blankley said, noting the city's transit center is "very much ready for this to happen."

Despite years of delays and cost overruns, the project, which aims to connect the Bay Area, Central Valley, and Southern California with high-speed trains, continues to have high support. A recent poll by the UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies found Californians back high-speed rail by a five-to-three margin. According to officials, 400 miles out of the 500-mile alignment of the system have been environmentally cleared. Sections that remain to be cleared include San Francisco to San Jose, Palmdale to Burbank and Los Angeles to Anaheim. The agency's board of directors said it would consider final EIR certification for the San Francisco to San Jose segment this summer.



Unfortunately, last year and to date, the State has not been interested in negotiating for premium pay for Unit 9 employees – or any other state employee bargaining unit. The PEGC Bargaining Team is certainly aware and understands the desire of field staff to receive or be eligible for premium pay for their work during the pandemic, and it is subject to negotiations in the current round of bargaining that is now underway. The current PEGC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) expires on July 1, 2022.

This is also a good time to remind members that PEGC cannot unilaterally put in place premium pay or any other benefit for Unit 9 employees. CalHR, representing the State, must also agree to any new benefit at the table. The PEGC Bargaining Team thanks you for your support during the current negotiations.

### PEGC Member Involvement

If you are interested in volunteering on any one of these San Diego Section Committees, please email our Section Past Director, Cristina Nunez at:  
[cristina.nunez@dot.ca.gov](mailto:cristina.nunez@dot.ca.gov)

- Events Planning Committee
- Health & Safety Comment
- Membership Committee
- Nominations & Election Committee
- Policy & Bylaws Committee
- Political Involvement Committee
- Retirement Committee
- Scholarship & Student Monitoring Committee

## Toot Our Horns Tuesdays!

May 10, 2022



May 2022 virtual Toot Our Horn Tuesdays was recently held with a theme “Top Gun” in honor of the Top Gun 2022 movie premier in San Diego and a fitting description to the newly hired transportation engineers. The new hires from the past few months were introduced at the event. Some new hires had a short video introduction played during the virtual gathering.

### ➤ Welcome New Engineers

Abdalla Ahmed (TE-MTCE Minor B)  
Nabil Abdou (TE-Construction)  
Lauren Lawless (TE-Design)  
Bashir Badi (TE-MTCE Minor B)  
Benjamin Liem (TE-Traffic)  
Meriam Chijhwaro (TE-MTCE)  
Jalal Daabas (TE-MTCE Minor B)  
Roman Palo (TE-Central Corridors)  
Eric Inouye (TE-Engineering)  
Claire Gaborne (TE-South Corridor)  
Gabriella Perez (TE- South Corridor)  
Brandon Ramirez (TE-Design)  
Karthik Somarajupalli (TE-Maintenance Eng)  
Mike Yang (TE-MTCE Minor B)

### ➤ 25 Years Anniversary

Leila Hajalilou (Engineering)

## PEGC Communications

- Public Outreach Committee
- Science Fair Committee Events Committee
- CHEERS Committee
- Grievance Committee
- STEM Committee

## QUICK LINKS

- Visit San Diego Section  
[sandiegopecg.org](http://sandiegopecg.org)
- Follow us on Twitter  
[Twitter.com/pecg\\_sandiego](https://twitter.com/pecg_sandiego)
- Health Plan Premiums 2021  
<http://pecg.org/members/resources/health-plan-premiums/>
- New MOU: 2020-2022  
<http://pecg.org/new-pecg-mou/>
- PECG Informer  
[pecg.org/communications/informer/](http://pecg.org/communications/informer/)

## PECG Laughs

### Glass Half Full

To the optimist, the glass is half full.  
To the pessimist, the glass is half empty.  
To the engineer, the glass is twice as big as it needs to be.



**Improve your public speaking and enhance your leadership skills!**

Try us out for free and join us in our virtual weekly meeting via Cisco Webex.

# PECG Outreach Program

One of PECG's goals is to promote the highest standards of professional practice. To accomplish this, PECG supports and sponsors programs that promote Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). This includes administering teacher training workshops, providing educational curriculum to schools, and conducting engineering competitions.

PECG also sponsored and distributes educational documentaries that explore innovative solutions to the most serious problems facing our environment, economy, and livability. They explore the challenges and successes in building and rebuilding major infrastructure projects.

### PECG-Supported Programs

Statewide and Regional Science & Engineering Fairs

Statewide and Regional Academic Decathlon Competitions

FIRST Lego League Robotics Competition

Promoting Readiness for Engineering Professions (PREP) Foundation Sponsored Programs

Founded by PECG, PREP is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit foundation dedicated to providing work-based opportunities and educational resources to students, educators, and the public with the mission of helping to inspire and develop the next generation of highly skilled engineers and related professionals in California

### AASHTO TRAC & RIDES Teacher Training Program

California Bridge Building Competition      The Bridge So Far – a Suspense Story” is an entertaining one-hour documentary on the often outrageous and always controversial history and status of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. Tragic, frustrating, comical, and historic, this entertaining documentary/news special follows the Bridge from its original construction through the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake up to the present day. It recounts the progress, delays, setbacks, and politics during the design and construction of a new, safe bridge to re-complete the connection across the Bay between San Francisco and Oakland.



To get more information and to be included in our invitation list, contact our Toastmaster CalState-1733 Vice-President of Membership, Cathryne Bruce-Johnson at [cathryne.bruce-johnson@dot.ca.gov](mailto:cathryne.bruce-johnson@dot.ca.gov).