

Emerging Leader Award

Amy Benecke McLaren, P.E.

Peoria County Highway Department

Amy Benecke McLaren, P.E., is chief design engineer for the Peoria County Highway Department. She designs new roads, highways, bridges, and drainage structures, and in her secondary role as Peoria County bridge inspection program manager, she is responsible for the safety of almost half of the bridges in Central Illinois. She inspects county structures as required by the Illinois Department of Transportation, and conducts all Peoria County bridge inspections personally, ensuring that all standards are met, procedures followed, and results documented.

After graduating from Bradley University in 1995 with a B.S. in civil engineering, McLaren joined the Peoria County Highway Department. She worked her way up to chief design engineer, taking on more responsibility and serving on countless regional committees and task forces. She has improved the overall technical proficiency of the highway department and coordinated with area emergency responders to prepare for disasters. Among her many accomplishments in the highway department are serving as resident engineer in federally funded construction projects, coordinating community meetings and public hearings, serving as Peoria County project liaison for multi-governmental feasibility studies, and serving on the Homeland Security Region 10 Roundtable.

McLaren has also continually upgraded her technical skills, becoming a licensed professional engineer soon after joining the highway department. She has completed National Highway Institute courses on bridge safety and inspec-



CITATION:

For outstanding leadership in civil engineering, service to the community, and for commitment to helping women advance their careers.

tion, and has taken IDOT classes on erosion control, bridge safety inspection, and culvert hydraulics.

McLaren's community involvement also displays her wide-ranging interests and abilities. She is a member of the Illinois River Valley Council of Governments' Stormwater Advisory Committee, Peoria Urban Forestry Advisory Board, Toastmasters, and Habitat for Humanity-Women Build.

In 2004, McLaren was recognized as one of the 40 Leaders Under 40 in Peoria. In 2005 she was named one of Ten Outstanding Young People of Illinois by the Illinois Jaycees and selected Woman of the Year by the Grandview chapter of the American Business Women's Association. McLaren is an avid gardener. She volunteers at the Luthy Botanical Garden, judges 4-H competitions, and is a University of Illinois Extension master gardener.

A longtime, active member of the SWE Central Illinois Section, McLaren has always helped

women advance and achieve in their careers. As a student at Bradley University, she was the charter vice president of the collegiate section. She served on the professional development committee for three years, and as outreach committee co-chair, she spoke at area schools and organized Eweek and Girl Scout Badge Day activities. In 2005, SWE chose McLaren for a Distinguished Member Award.

McLaren has two sons, Will, 5, and Kegan, 2. Her husband, Mike, is a licensed structural engineer, and the two have been married for 10 years.