



welcome

The official newsletter of SMPS South Florida. Our mission is to engage, inspire, and empower A/E/C professionals for leadership and lifelong learning.

Our purpose is to promote the professional and educational advancement of marketing professional services and business activities on behalf of professional services and construction firms, to foster an understanding of the skills and techniques employed in such activities, and to exchange information that ensures the continuous growth and success of our industry.

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LETTER FROM OUR President

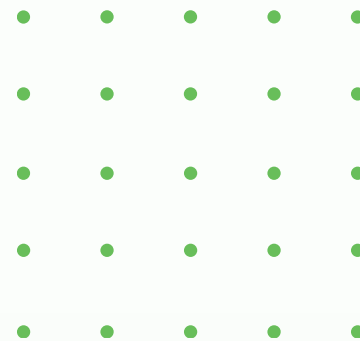
Kelly Stout

Business Development Specialist

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Hello SMPS South Florida friends,

It's an honor to welcome you to the 2025-2026 SMPS South Florida Chapter for our community and to my very first "Letter from the President." I'm Kelly Stout, your new SMPS Chapter President. By day, I help grow DRMP through business development; at heart, I'm a connector, of people, ideas, and opportunities. I joined SMPS because I believe our work is a true engine for growth. I stepped up to lead after seeing what happens when talented marketers and BD pros are equipped, encouraged, and connected: firms win smarter, careers accelerate, and our region's infrastructure and public spaces thrive. We're better together.

This year, our Board and committee leaders are focused on four priorities that will guide everything we do:

1. **Connections.** Expect high-energy programs and networking that feel welcoming and purposeful; socials, peer roundtables, and panel events that help you meet the right people at the right time.
2. **Capability.** We'll level up the skills that drive wins—proposal strategy, client experience, data-driven BD, AI-enabled marketing, and client satisfaction. CPSM candidates will have structured support.
3. **Career Growth.** Whether you're new to the industry or leading a team, you'll find clear mentorship tracks, leadership opportunities, and practical tools to move your career forward. Shoutout to Rachel Stevens for building our chapter's first Mentorship Program.
4. **Community.** We're deepening partnerships across the A/E/C ecosystem and giving back through volunteerism, scholarships, and service. Our industry is stronger when we build it together.

You'll hear me talk often about a simple practice we're bringing to life this term: "Dear Future Me." I've asked our Board, and I'm inviting every member, to write a short letter to yourself dated 16 months from now. Why 16? Well, our fiscal year changes to a calendar year during my term as President: an extra four months to lead this incredible chapter! **Where do you want to be: in your role, your skills, your network, your impact?** Seal it (literally or digitally). We'll check back at the end of the term. It's a powerful way to turn intention into momentum, and it aligns perfectly with what SMPS is all about: charting a course and then walking it together. Please email me and I will gladly send you a copy of the instructions on how to participate.

So where will we be 16 months from today?

- We'll be a **more connected chapter**, with stronger ties among marketers, BD professionals, and technical leaders, with a reputation for welcoming new voices.
- We'll be **measurably more capable**, with members reporting wins from applying what they learned in our programs: smarter go/no-go decisions, clearer value propositions, better interviews and shortlist presentations, and stronger client relationships.
- We'll be **growing careers**, with a thriving mentorship group, CPSM study support, and more members stepping into visible leadership roles.
- And we'll be **giving back**, with volunteer hours, student engagement, and cross-organization collaborations that lift the entire South Florida A/E/C community.



LETTER FROM OUR President

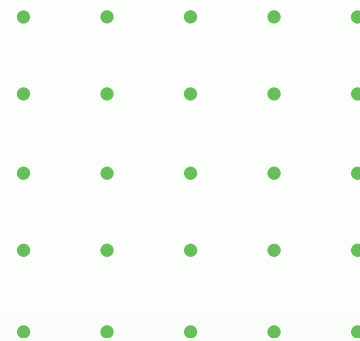
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Our vision is ambitious, but it's achievable because of you. This chapter runs on member energy, your expertise, your curiosity, your willingness to show up and contribute. If you've ever thought, "I should get more involved," consider this your nudge. Join a committee, raise your hand to speak on a panel, mentor someone new to the industry, or simply bring a colleague to the next event. There's a place for you here.

To make your first (or next) step easy, here are three quick actions you can take this month:

- Write your "Dear Future Me" note and set a reminder for 16 months out.
- Pick one program from our calendar and invite a colleague to join you.
- Introduce yourself to someone new at the next event—and follow up within a week.

Finally, I want to thank our sponsors, partners, and volunteers whose support powers our mission. Your investment helps us deliver relevant programming, leadership development, and a vibrant professional community that advances the practice of marketing and business development across our region.

I'm excited, humbled, and genuinely inspired by what we will accomplish together. Here's to a year of bold learning, meaningful connections, and wins that matter—for our firms, our clients, and our careers.

With gratitude and momentum,

Kelly

Kelly Stout
President, SMPS South Florida
Business Development Specialist, DRMP


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P.S. If you're ready to get involved, email me **"Put me in Coach"** and I'll connect you with the right committee chair and get you started. Join us; you will not regret it!

EDITOR'S COLUMN



Carolina Correa
Director of Communications
SMPS South Florida

Connect with me on 

As we launch into a new SMPS South Florida year, I'm excited to introduce this column as a space to reflect, connect, and highlight the stories shaping our chapter.

In this first issue, you'll notice a strong current of **connection** — from President Kelly Stout's invitation to write a "Dear Future Me" letter, to the dynamic programs already underway, to the growing energy of our committees. This is more than a newsletter; it's a snapshot of how marketing and business development professionals in the A/E/C industry are learning, leading, and lifting one another up.

Each quarter, I'll use this space to draw a line between our chapter's communications and the larger goals we've set: growing awareness, driving engagement, and showcasing the value of SMPS membership. I'll also spotlight the people and ideas behind the scenes, because your stories are what bring these pages to life.

So here's my ask: if you have a win, a lesson learned, or a perspective worth sharing, let's talk. This column is not just my voice, it's yours too. Together, we'll make sure every issue reflects the creativity and momentum of our South Florida community.

SMPS NATIONAL

RESOURCES & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SMPS members: Join us for our complimentary virtual [Master More Learning Labs](#).

This educational series features timely topics presented by industry practitioners that can help you build skills to work smarter, advance your career, and build your firm's business. This series is for SMPS members only. Not a member? [Join Today!](#)

Offered several times a year and earning 1 CEU, each program runs 60 minutes to fit into your busy schedule. As part of your SMPS membership, take advantage of this complimentary series to boost your skillset.

Labs are recorded and available on-demand in the Learning Labs folder in the Marketing Resource Center on MySMPS, our members-only online community.

1 CEU | 60 min



Emerging Trends in A/E/C Marketing and Business Development

with Sarah Kinard
and Michele Raftery
FSMPS, CPSM, WELL AP

SIGN UP



TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21 | 12PM EST

AMPLIFY
A/E/C

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

powered by **smps**

proposal deadline:

October 24, 2025

Calling all thought leaders!

We're inviting thought leaders, practitioners, firm leaders, marketers, business developers, and client partners to submit vendor-neutral, practice-tested sessions that help A/E/C marketers and business developers drive growth. We're looking for ideas with clear outcomes, grounded examples or data, and actionable takeaways attendees can implement immediately.

Please refer to the [Call for Proposals](#) to review requirements for submission.

SMPS SERC 2026

Norfolk, VA

350+

A/E/C professionals

11

SMPS Chapters

Alabama, Atlanta,
Charlotte, Central
Florida, Nashville,
North Florida,
Palmetto, Research
Triangle, South
Florida, Tampa Bay,
and Virginia.

After a very successful 2025 conference in our tropical West Palm Beach, FL, organized by SMPS South Florida, the SMPS Southeastern Regional Conference in 2026 promises to be nothing short of amazing. The conference is themed: **Beyond the Looking Glass: Building Clarity, Creativity, and Connection**, and will take place in Norfolk, Virginia from March 17 to 19, 2026, at the Hilton Norfolk The Main Hotel. Downtown Norfolk, surrounded by the Elizabeth River, is a vibrant, walkable city center with easy access to countless restaurants and shops, as well as landmarks and institutions like Towne Point Park, Nauticus Maritime Discover Center, and the Battleship Wisconsin.

Applications to be a speaker are open now, click on next page for details.

Whether you are an SMPS member or a non-member, take advantage of the **early bird registration special available for the first 75 registrants**. Reserve your spot as a conference attendee today. [REGISTER NOW!](#)

We can't wait to see you there!





SPEAKER APPLICATION DUE
OCTOBER 27, 2025



BEYOND THE LOOKING GLASS:

CLARITY, CREATIVITY, AND CONNECTION IN A NEW LANDSCAPE

2026 CALL FOR SPEAKERS

Hilton Norfolk - The Main | Norfolk, VA
March 17-19, 2026

smps | Southeastern
Regional Conference

www.smps-srcc.org

REALIZING THE VALUE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

When Planning Tomorrow's Healthcare Facilities



by: Tatiana Guimaraes and Lorena Knezevic

Gensler

The true value of Artificial Intelligence (AI) lies not just in its ability to revolutionize devices and treatments but in its power to drive ROI by enabling smarter, more adaptable healthcare environments.

Artificial intelligence is revolutionizing healthcare, not only by enhancing efficiency and improving patient experiences, but also by redefining the value of investing in adaptable, future-proof infrastructure. As medical technologies evolve at a pace far exceeding the lifespans of the buildings designed to house them, it is crucial for the architecture and construction industry to rise to the challenge of adaptability.

AI offers a transformative opportunity to bridge this gap, enabling smarter design processes that align with the dynamic nature of healthcare.

In recent years, investment in generative AI has skyrocketed, reshaping industries and accelerating innovation. Yet, the buildings that house these innovations often lag in adaptability. This disparity raises a critical question: how can we design healthcare environments that keep pace with technological change and maximize their long-term value? The true value of AI lies not just in its ability to revolutionize devices and treatments, but in its power to drive return on investment through smarter, more adaptable healthcare environments.

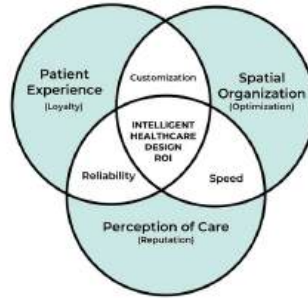
THE GAP BETWEEN INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

While investment in construction technology has doubled over the past decade, according to McKinsey & Company, the pace of healthcare innovation still far outstrips advancements in the built environment. Medical devices and AI-enabled systems are evolving faster than the facilities designed to accommodate them. Buildings, with lifespans often exceeding 50 years, must be planned with flexibility in mind to adapt to these shorter technology cycles.

For designers, this gap represents an opportunity. Understanding the trajectory of healthcare innovation can help clients future-proof their investments, ensuring facilities remain relevant and functional for decades to come. This involves rethinking traditional approaches to design and embracing modular, adaptable layouts that can evolve alongside advancements in medical technology.

DEFINING VALUE IN HEALTHCARE DESIGN

Value in healthcare is multifaceted – encompassing efficiency, patient satisfaction, and long-term functionality. Architects play a pivotal role in shaping these environments, ensuring they not only meet current demands but also anticipate future needs. Now is the time to invest in adaptable, future-proof designs.



Enhancing ROI through Intelligent Healthcare Design: A Conceptual Framework by Lorena Knezevic Doctoral Research Candidate, 2024, Florida International University.

Constructing with the future of AI in mind has the following main benefits:

- **Optimization:** Spatial organization is the key factor in travel distances, operational efficiencies, and ultimately doctor-patient care time. AI can analyze patient volume, forecast admissions, and determine staffing needs, enabling more precise resource allocation and streamlined operations. For example, predictive tools can estimate patient length of stay, informing decisions about room counts and department layouts.
- **Reputation:** Perception of care is increasingly influenced by factors beyond direct medical treatment, including the look and feel of the environment, waiting time, cost of medical service, or easy access to the facility. AI can help improve time management and reduce patient wait times, enhancing the overall experience and building trust.
- **Loyalty:** A positive patient experience fosters loyalty. In an era of private medical services, patients have a choice of where to receive healthcare. AI-driven insights into behavior and preferences can help designers create environments that prioritize comfort and accessibility, ensuring patients choose to return.

By integrating AI into the design process, architects can support a greater ROI through predictive insights to optimize spatial layouts, improve resource allocation, and enhance patient experiences. This collaboration between AI and design positions architects as strategic partners in healthcare innovation, driving environments that are resilient, adaptable, and aligned with the accelerating pace of medical advancement.

LEVERAGING AI FOR INTELLIGENT HEALTHCARE DESIGN

Architects can use AI to revolutionize healthcare space planning by combining deep insights from data with design strategies that prioritize efficiency, adaptability, and care outcomes. This includes:

- **Spatial Organization:** By leveraging AI to streamline operations and enhance environmental aesthetics, architects can design spaces that build trust, reinforce institutional reputation, and improve the overall patient experience. In addition, AI tools can analyze patient volumes and predict resource needs, ensuring facilities are appropriately scaled.

For instance, AI can forecast patient admissions and staff requirements, enabling more accurate program KPU requirements, which ultimately better size the project.



Acibadem Atasehir Hospital, Children's Pavilion & HQ, Istanbul, Turkey. Photo by Furkan Uyan.

REALIZING THE VALUE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

When Planning Tomorrow's Healthcare Facilities



- **Infection Control & Inventory Management:** AI-driven safety strategies, such as live germ spread analysis and smart HVAC systems, optimize air quality and minimize contamination risks. These tools track behavior and proximity to mitigate infection risks, creating safer environments.

AI can also streamline supply chain operations, predicting just-in-time delivery needs and managing surge inventory capacity. This reduces redundancy and maximizes back-of-house efficiency.

- **Perception of Care:** The architect's ability to craft spaces that enhance patient experience is amplified through AI, which provides real-time insights into behavior and preferences. By integrating personalized environmental controls and adaptive design strategies, architects can create spaces that comfort, engage, and empower patients. AI can optimize scheduling and track patient throughput, reducing wait times, improving caregiver/patient interaction, and positively influencing the perception of care. These enhancements directly impact patient satisfaction, as reflected in post-visit surveys. Data analytics with AI also can provide actionable insights into patient flow and staff utilization, enabling facilities to recalibrate operations for maximum efficiency.
- **Patient Experience:** AI enhances the patient experience by creating environments tailored to individual needs. This may be in the form of a behavioral pattern analysis to influence design decisions.

Technologies like virtual reality and eye-tracking help identify sightlines and functional areas within a space, optimizing layouts for usability and comfort.

AI-driven systems allow for the adjustment of environmental factors like lighting, sound, and graphics in real-time based on patient vitals and stress levels. This personalization improves comfort and reduces anxiety, particularly in scenarios like MRI scans. Chatbot-enabled systems allow patients to adjust their surroundings – from lighting to bed positions, enhancing their sense of control and comfort.

FUTURE-PROOFING HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

The rapid integration of AI into healthcare underscores the importance of designing facilities that can adapt to future changes. Modular layouts and flexible infrastructure are essential for accommodating evolving technologies and workflows. Designers must anticipate shifts in healthcare delivery and create environments that support innovation without requiring extensive renovations.

The value of AI in healthcare extends far beyond the technology itself. By strategically leveraging AI, architects bridge the gap between healthcare innovation and construction, delivering environments that maximize ROI for patients, providers, and the industry as a whole. Their expertise is the foundation for navigating the complexities of this rapidly evolving landscape and ensuring that healthcare spaces are both innovative and enduring.

For media inquiries, email media@gensler.com.



TELUS Health Care Centre, Calgary, Canada. Photo by Joel Klassen.



TELUS Health Care Centre, Calgary, Canada. Photo by Joel Klassen.

Education PANEL *recap*

September 10, 2025

On September 10, SMPS South Florida hosted its Education Panel, Reimagining Learning Environments and Designing for the Future, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Deerfield. The program brought together a distinguished group of education leaders and industry voices to share insights on how South Florida's schools and universities are adapting to change.

Panelists included:

- **Daniel J. Alfonso, Ed.D.**, Nova Southeastern University
- **Dave (David) Dolan**, Palm Beach County School District
- **Ana Ovalles**, Broward College
- **Curt Brown**, Palm Beach Atlantic University
- **Dean Butters**, Banyan Strategic Partners
- **Gary Tarbe**, Gulliver Prep

The discussion was moderated by **Joseph Sanches**, Palm Beach County School District.



In true SMPS spirit, the program delivered both insight and connection. Members left with actionable takeaways and new relationships to strengthen their work. A special thank you to our event sponsors: **DPR Construction**, **DLR Group**, **Osborn Engineering**, and **Turner**. We also gratefully acknowledge our annual sponsors, whose continued support powers our chapter: **Gold: DRMP, Core Construction | Silver: Suffolk, NV2A Group, Anchor Health Properties, Caulfield & Wheeler, Inc. | Bronze: Baker Construction, H2R Corp**

If you missed it, we hope to see you at our next program! — join us as we continue to explore the issues shaping our industry.



COFFEE TALK

OCTOBER 3, 2025



THANKS TO ALL ATTENDEES!

This month, SMPS South Florida members came together for Coffee Talks in Miami-Dade (*hosted by NV2A Group*) and Broward (*hosted by Anchor Health Properties*), enjoying a relaxed format that encouraged open, real-world conversation.

Discussions touched on industry trends like the growing role of AI, Marketing and BD team collaboration, and how the new generation of A/E/C professionals are shaping our industry, helping it catch up with the pace of changes seen in other sectors. Members also shared resources such as favorite podcasts and newsletters that keep skills sharp and ideas flowing.

The casual setting allowed for laughter, story-sharing, and thoughtful dialogue, reminding us that even over morning coffee, we can walk away with new insights and stronger connections.

Coffee Talks continue to show that when A/E/C professionals gather, the result is more than conversation. **It is community.**

Stay tuned for the next round of sessions, where you'll find the easiest way to start your morning with inspiration, ideas, and new connections across South Florida.



smps[®]

South Florida meet the board

social



Upcoming Events


 


Save the Date
WEDNESDAY
5TH
NOVEMBER

**BLUEPRINTS FOR GROWTH:
THE LIVE LOCAL ACT** 1.5 CEUs

**SOUTH FLORIDA DEVELOPERS PANEL – SHAPING
COMMUNITIES, BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES**


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<p>ANNUAL GOLD SPONSORS</p>  	<p>ANNUAL SILVER SPONSORS</p>    	<p>ANNUAL BRONZE SPONSORS</p>  

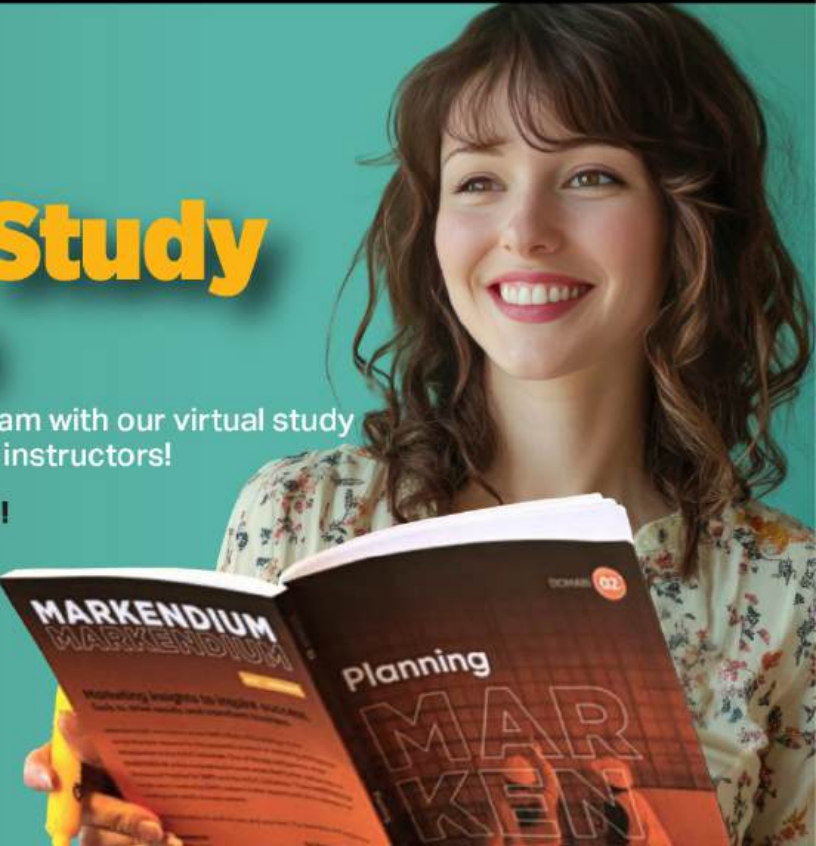
 **VIRTUAL STUDY GROUP**



CPSM Study Group

Prepare for the big exam with our virtual study group led by certified instructors!
All chapters welcome!

kickoff
11.06.25 



SWIPE RIGHT

by: Kristen Lawlor Mau
CMO, Jezerinac Group



ON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

If you've even had one eye open in the South Florida construction market lately, you know the game has changed. It's not enough to show up at a client's office with bagels and a smile (although, that does work to an extent; why are Architects always so hungry? A deep dive for another day, I suppose).

More projects are leaning into Design-Build, CMAR, and progressive delivery methods, which means clients aren't just looking for a good engineer, architect, or contractor; they're looking for the full package.

TRANSLATION: TEAMING HAS OFFICIALLY BECOME THE NEW POWER MOVE.

WHY TEAMING IS TRENDING

South Florida is booming in every direction. Municipalities are expanding fire stations and emergency operations centers. Higher education is on the rise with FIU, FAU, and USF campuses adding new facilities – mic drop for my firm as the Structural EOR on USF's new football stadium and training facility (woot, woot)! Healthcare systems are increasingly opening small, independent buildings like urgent care centers, specialty clinics, and neighborhood medical offices to bring services closer to communities, while reducing pressure on large hospital campuses. And private development is still strong in residential, mixed-use, and yes even sports and entertainment (you may have heard whispers about a new stadium or two; if you do, call me)! Wink, wink.

With this much activity, owners want more than a list of qualifications; they want a team that can deliver creativity, speed, and cost certainty without the finger-pointing. That's why we're seeing a stronger emphasis on strategic partnerships, joint ventures, and long-term teaming arrangements. The firms that are thriving aren't just chasing projects; they're investing in relationships. And long-term ones at that.

LESSONS FROM THE FIELD (AND THE WAR ROOM)

If you've ever pulled an all-nighter, you know partnerships can make or break the experience. The glossy proposal submission phase feels a lot like dating: everyone's on their best behavior, you wear your best suit and tie (we all know you can usually be found in flip flops and yoga pants) and you talk about your future together in glowing terms. But when the project starts, reality sets in. Does your partner communicate? Collaborate? Still laugh when the schedule goes sideways? Jump in to help solve a problem?

Here's what we're seeing works best in South Florida:

- **Choose wisely.** Owners notice when a team complements each other's strengths instead of competing for the spotlight. Pick partners who add expertise and mesh with your team's style. Nothing speaks more than synergy and cultural values that appear seamless.
- **Think long-term.** Some of the best opportunities come from repeat collaborations. Owners remember the "dream teams" that show up again and again on RFPs.
- **Align values.** A partner who shares your approach to communication, client care, and problem-solving is more valuable than a big-name firm that doesn't play well in the sandbox.
- **Keep it fun.** South Florida moves faster than a BMW in the far-left lane of 95 at 5pm. Having partners you enjoy being in the trenches with (and laughing through the chaos of an 11th-hour addendum) is half the battle.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In a market this active, success isn't about being everywhere. It's about being with the right partners, on the right teams, in the right rooms. Whether it's a municipal project, a university expansion, a healthcare addition, or the next big sports facility, teaming early and often is the surest way to build staying power in South Florida.

At the end of the day, partnerships aren't just about chasing the next project. They're about building trust, expanding reach, and creating a reputation for being part of a team that gets things done. And maybe with minimal AS requests.

Teaming in South Florida can be a wild ride, but the right partner makes the ride feel like a convertible cruise down A1A with a hat on. Because clearly, we have to protect our perfect blow outs after all.



As Jezerinac Group's Chief Marketing Officer, Kristen Lawlor Mau is responsible for the creative force behind the brand's narrative and market presence. Kristen provides oversight of the marketing and business development strategy for the firm, including developing and implementing marketing plans to promote the firm's services, managing branding efforts, conducting market research, and collaborating with other departments to align firm initiatives with the business goals. With nearly 20 years of experience in the AEC industry, Kristen thrives on transforming complex engineering concepts into captivating narratives.

Building **better structures,**
building **better lives.**

We do things the Baker Way.

We put people first. We honor our word. We possess the grit to take on challenges. We work to the highest standards. We deliver peak performance. We never compromise safety.

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MIAMI FREEDOM PARK



HARDROCK HOLLYWOOD GUITAR HOTEL

Call for Volunteers

As the heartbeat of South Florida's marketing and business development professionals in the A/E/C sector, SMPS South Florida recognizes the importance of diverse perspectives and expertise in driving innovation and progress. Whether individuals are seasoned professionals or burgeoning talents, eager to make their mark, there's a place for everyone to contribute and grow within our organization.

By joining committees or board positions, volunteers have the opportunity to shape the future of the industry, foster meaningful connections, and actively participate in initiatives that elevate the standards of practice and excellence within the A/E/C community and our chapter. Embracing collaboration and collective wisdom, SMPS South Florida invites individuals to **embark on this journey of professional development and community engagement by joining our board or a committee!**

For more information, please contact SMPS President **Kelly Stout** at kstout@drmp.com



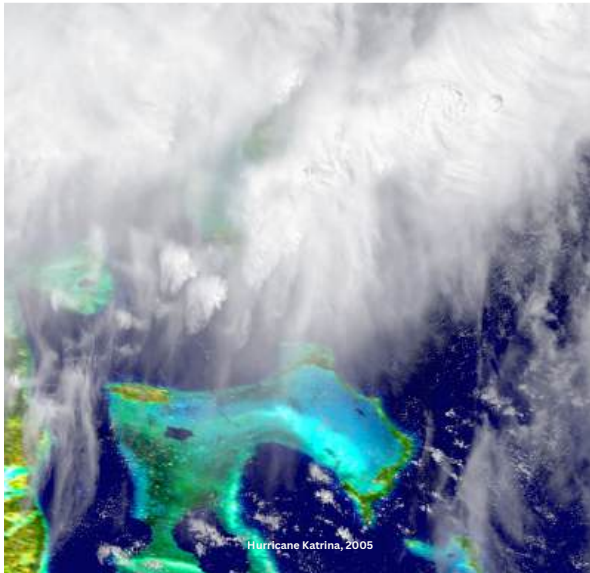
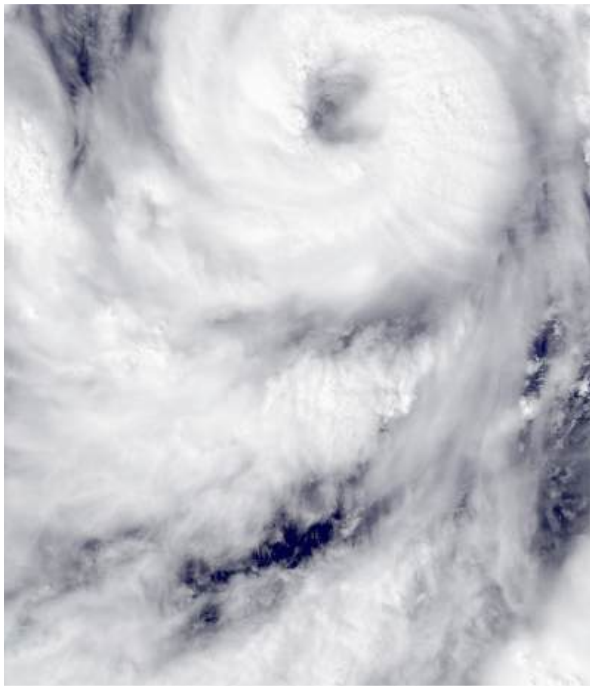
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Proposed FEMA Reform Legislation Places Local Governments in Position to Accelerate Recovery

It's been 20 years since Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast and brought devastation to so many. Since then, there have been several attempts to legislate reform and improve program delivery through redesign of processes and procedures. With decades of effort to get disaster recovery right and a lot of political attention on the future of FEMA, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee released draft legislation that would dramatically change how FEMA operates following a disaster. The "Fixing Emergency Management for Americans Act," (FEMA Act) was released as a "discussion draft" with members of Congress and other relevant stakeholders providing feedback.

Previous attempts by FEMA and Congress to improve the Public Assistance (PA) program by expanding eligibility and streamlining processes fell short during implementation. While helpful and certainly an improvement, they overlooked the most critical issue that causes delays and disputes – the conflicts over repair scope and cost. Addressing that issue is where the FEMA Act differentiates itself from past legislative and agency efforts at reform.

DRMP helps clients navigate FEMA's PA program with accurate scope and cost estimates, consensus-based codes and standards, mitigation strategies, and environmental compliance. We streamline planning and funding to speed delivery and strengthen infrastructure resilience.

That is why I have an optimistic interest in the proposed changes under Division B - FEMA Reforms, Title I - Public Assistance Reforms, Section 101. This section, which addresses the rebuilding of public infrastructure, directly addresses one of my top priorities for FEMA PA reforms: reliance on local, licensed professionals for project formulation and cost estimates. Five major adjustments included in this section of the legislation are:

- (2)(A)(a) – "Shall be determined, without regard to preexisting condition."
- 2)(B)(a) – "Shall be presumed to be accurate and reasonable unless there is evidence of criminal fraud."
- (3) Submission – "In evaluating whether such cost estimation is accurate and reasonable, the administrator may not consider pre-existing condition..."
- (3) Submission – "Unless there is evidence of criminal fraud, such estimates shall be deemed to be approved not later than 90 days after submission of such estimates."

Proposed FEMA Reform Legislation Places Local Governments in Position to Accelerate Recovery

- (6) Finality of Approvals – “Unless there is evidence of criminal fraud, no legal or administrative action with respect to such approval or adjustment, as applicable, to recover any payment under this section shall be initiated in any forum.”

The creation of Section 409, which outlines an “Expedited Repair, Restoration, and Replacement of Damaged Facilities” process, would revolutionize disaster recovery in this country by placing responsibility and accountability with local units of government to quantify and estimate their damages. Previous attempts to implement this policy at the Agency level, such as the Oct 19, 2011 Memo to all Regional Administrators, from the Assistant Administrator Recovery Directorate, regarding Applicant Provided Information, was a precursor to the legislation proposed in the FEMA Act but was difficult to apply in practice. By codifying the requirement to accept Applicant Provided Information (API) with a presumption of accuracy, Congress will greatly reduce the potential for bureaucratic overreach during implementation and tap into local, qualified and knowledgeable professionals to expand capacity to recover.



With a 90-day review process to determine evidence of “criminal fraud,” this legislation would remove at least 12 review and approval steps in the current process. It should be assumed that this approach would greatly reduce the number for personnel FEMA deploys and staffs at Consolidated Resource Centers (CRC), bringing cost savings to the federal government. With a 90-day review process and 30-day duration for award, local governments could reliably schedule projects to accelerate the recovery timeline and reduce cost escalation.

The proposed legislation, as written in the current draft, would presumably eliminate disputes between FEMA and local architects and engineers on means and methods of repair, reductions of scope and/or cost during CDC reviews, or even worse, denial of funds during construction. This approach would place responsibility for recovery with the local government, supported by a reliable federal partner, while maintaining proper oversight and fiscal controls by the federal government.

The proposed legislation, as written in the current draft, would presumably eliminate disputes between FEMA and local architects and engineers on means and methods of repair, reductions of scope and/or cost during CDC reviews, or, even worse, denial of funds during construction. This approach would place responsibility for recovery with the local government, supported by a reliable federal partner, while maintaining proper oversight and fiscal controls by the federal government.

This legislation also proposes many other elements designed to reduce FEMA resource requirements, streamline management costs, and maintain appropriate oversight. The Fixing Emergency Management for Americans Act represents a bold change to disaster recovery that prioritizes efficiency, transparency, and accountability with local governments.

We will continue to monitor this legislation and engage when possible, to advocate for reforms that are a win for both FEMA, State and local governments, and the American public to improve quicker recovery times and more effective use of federal resources.



Joshua Norman serves as the Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Practice Leader for DRMP. His responsibilities include overseeing DRMP's resilience and sustainability and grant administration projects. The majority of Mr. Norman's experience is within the field of emergency planning, response, mitigation, resilience, and disaster recovery. He has 17 years of experience in the areas of program and project management and inter-governmental relations. Mr. Norman has developed and administered more than \$1 billion in grants including new construction, repair, and retrofit for various infrastructure and government facilities. He served as recovery manager for the City of New Orleans during hurricane Katrina recovery and since has served as Principal, Program Manager, and Subject Matter Expert for clients across the country in approximately 25 named disasters.



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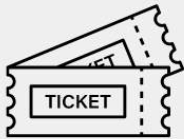
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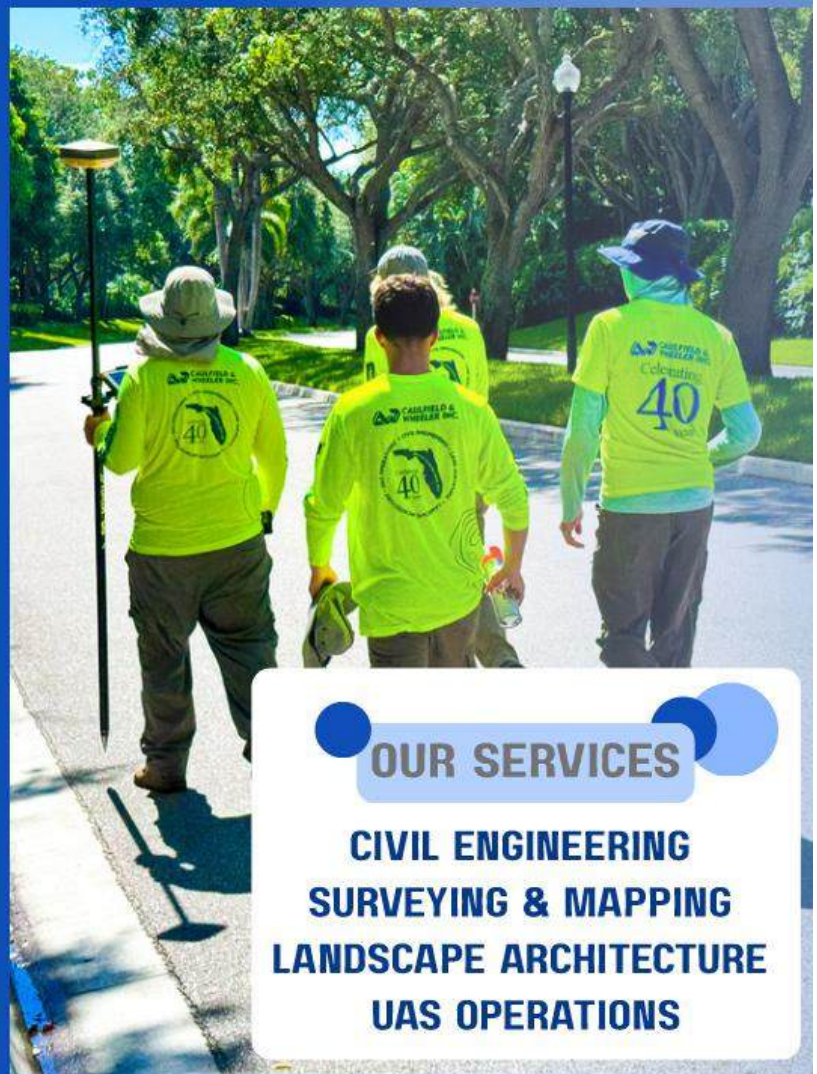
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With 18 years in the A/E/C industry and 13 in marketing, I've built my passion around strategic communications and proposal development. An SMPS member for over a decade and a CPSM since 2016, I've led Mentorship Programs and CPSM study groups, helping others grow in their careers and certification journeys.



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Introducing DEI in the A/E/C Industry: Building Better Together

By Eric Gerber-Weiss, Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

I'm excited to introduce myself as the new Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) for SMPS South Florida. As our chapter continues to grow and evolve in the Architecture, Engineering, and Construction (AEC) industry, it's essential that we do so in a way that reflects our commitment to people as much as to projects, especially in such a diverse background as the South Florida landscape.

DEI is more than just a set of buzzwords—it's a framework for creating workplaces where everyone can thrive. In simple terms:

- **Diversity** is about representation—ensuring our teams reflect a range of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences.
- **Equity** focuses on fairness—giving everyone what they need to succeed, rather than assuming one size fits all.
- **Inclusion** means belonging—fostering an environment where every voice is heard, valued, and respected.

In the AEC industry, DEI is not optional—it's transformative. Our work literally shapes the spaces where people live, work, and connect. When our teams are diverse and inclusive, we design more innovative, functional, and equitable spaces. Within SMPS South Florida, embracing DEI makes us stronger collaborators, problem-solvers, and leaders, both within our firms and across the region's professional community.

As a chapter, we have an incredible opportunity to lead by example. Whether we're recruiting new talent, collaborating on projects, or building relationships across disciplines, DEI is key to strengthening our connections—with each other, our clients, and the communities we serve here in South Florida.

I look forward to working alongside each of you to ensure that DEI is not just a goal, but a daily practice woven into the fabric of our chapter. Together, we can build a culture that reflects the vibrancy of our region and sets a standard for our industry. Let's build better—**together**.

Need help with a DEI question or idea? I'm here. Reach out anytime at eric.gerber-weiss@drmp.com



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- Benefit from leadership opportunities, training, and skills to build your career and your firm's business
- Amplify your influence with your marketing team and firm to create more business opportunities
- Join a community of like-minded peers, over 7,100 strong, engaged in advancing the value of marketing and business development in the A/E/C industries, and in the success of their firms

For more information, please contact **Renee Kissane** at rkissane@corradino.com



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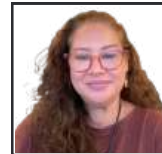
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SMPS South Florida welcomes you to reach out for event ideas, programming, and suggestions!
We're also always accepting volunteers to help on our committees.
Please reach out to Chapter President, Kelly Stout, for more information.



THE AEC NEXUS

A quarterly publication of the latest news, events, and educational opportunities for SMPS South Florida members.



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