



CANDIDATE STATEMENTS/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Candidate for Secretary / Treasurer

John Karnowski



Candidate's Professional Biography

- Education:
 1. B.C.E. – Georgia Institute of Technology
- Career:
 1. Traffic Service National Director, NV5 (formerly CALYX Engineers) – 2015-Pres
 2. Transportation Practice Area Leader, Foresite Group – 2011-2015
 3. Sr. Associate of Traffic & Transportation, Stantec – 2010-2011
 4. Director of Traffic & Transportation, Street Smarts (purchase by Stantec 2010) – 1994-2010
 5. Construction Supervisor, City of Roswell, GA – 1988-1994
- Registrations:
 1. Professional Engineer (AL, AR, FL, GA, ID, KY, LA, ME, MI, NC, SC, TN, TX, VA, WI)
 2. American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP)
 3. Professional Traffic Operations Engineer (PTOE)
- Membership:
 1. ITE International Member, GA Section
 2. ITS Georgia
 3. ITS Carolinas (Board Member)
 4. ACEC/GA
 5. ASHE

ITE Service Summary

- GA Section President – 2012
- GA Section Vice President – 2011
- GA Section Sec/Tres – 2010
- GA Section Scholarship Committee – 2011 to Pres
- GA Section Summer Seminar Committee – 2002 to 2021 (Chair 2009)
- GA Section Winter Workshop Committee – 2011 to 2021
- ITE Mentoring Program

- ITE Leadership Program
- GA Tech Student Chapter Liaison - 2002-2006

Other Volunteer Service

- Gwinnett Transit Advisory Board – Chair
- Leadership Gwinnett
- Community rec-league coach – 20 years (baseball, soccer, football, basketball, softball)

Discussion Points

- **Reasons for running for office:**

ITE is a great organization with a rich history of outstanding leadership. Each leader that has come before us has poured some portion of themselves into it to help make it stronger and more effective in carrying out its mission: to equip and empower transportation professionals to provide safe and efficient transportation. My hope is that I can help lead the Southern District in the same way and give back to an organization that has had the greatest impact on my career.

- **Discussion of the candidate's goals and priorities as a member of the Executive Committee:**

My Vision for the Southern District of ITE is the same as within my own work group or even within my own family:

ENHANCE Possibilities, Diversity, & Opportunities

We need to broaden our reach (*possibilities*) so that men and women from all corners of the profession (*diversity*) can have the *opportunity* to serve, lead, learn, and grow.

DEVELOP Leaders, Managers, & Activists

A strong organization needs to invest in its members. I believe everyone can be *leaders* in some way if given the opportunity and if they choose to rise to the challenge. Our members can be encouraged to be effective *managers* of programs championed by the organization. By building up leaders and managers, ITE will create professionals that are *active* in their professional and civic communities – people who create a positive impact for change.

BUILD Relationships, Bridges & Reputation

ITE is all about *relationships*; it is one of reasons it exists. Relationships are built by mutual trust and collective effort. As an organization of state sections and student chapters, the Southern District is charged with connecting (*bridging*) the geographic divide to create a platform for cooperation. It is also incumbent on each Section and the District as a whole to make ITE the go-to transportation professional organization (*reputation*).

- **Discussion of how the candidate anticipates accomplishing his/her goals:**

The best way to involve people in the organization is to have a task to do and then ask people to help with it. Instead of posting a general need on the website or calling a friend, we build new relationships when we go outside of our immediate circle and find someone new. Moreover, if we look for people who are

different from us, we build diversity and a variety of ideas. Having something to do and getting people on board to accomplish the task will accomplish all the goals in the Vision described above.

For example, if we wanted to make ITE 'funner' (to shamelessly borrow from the NC Section), we can convene a group of engineers, planners, and vendors from small states and large states – men and women who vary in age from 24 to 64 (more or less) and aren't all the same. Some might be leaders within their sections but some would be emerging leaders and some just interested in making ITE funner. We would have them self-select a leader, charge them with developing three to five things that can be accomplished within the next year, and then have them identify champions for those ideas. In just one initiative, all the elements of the Vision can be met – and maybe also make ITE funner.

Some state sections are very good at creating an atmosphere of cooperation among its members. They recognize that there are inherent differences within their members: consultants from competing firms, public sector employees at all levels, vendors and others who can sometimes feel like they are on the outside looking in. But the best Sections focus on what we have in common: the desire to train and equip the next generation of professionals, to provide a safe transportation system, and to promote better mobility.

- **Discussion of the challenges and opportunities the candidate believes the profession will face in the coming three years:**

The shortage of new engineers has been well documented, but it is even greater within our own field of engineering. We struggle to present transportation planning and engineering as a career worthy of pursuit. Access to transportation is one of the greatest factors in determining economic prosperity. Our challenge is to show the next generation of professionals – students and new engineers alike – that we offer a benefit to the public that can be rich and rewarding. Our challenge in the coming years is to demonstrate through our actions that we provide an essential service to society that enhances the quality of life for everyone.

Our organization has always risen to the challenge of changing technology. Innovations over the years – from anti-lock brakes, actuated traffic controllers, and traffic simulation programs – have enhanced our effectiveness and allowed us to accomplish our mission of safe and efficient transportation. We use technology to make transportation better. However, automated vehicles are turning all that upside down – *they* will be (or are, depending on who you talk to) the better transportation we seek, and *we* are tools to make them more effective. Our profession will have to continually adapt to what is, at present, an unknown paradigm in the rollout of ever-increasing intelligence in transportation options.

The continued urbanization of our society presents challenges to mobility in cities whose leaders had previously ignored or been slow to adapt to multi-modal needs. Transportation professionals can, and should be the champions for smart growth, intelligent transportation, and wise choices in funding and policy making.

- **Discussion of the challenges and opportunities the candidate believes the Sections, District, or international ITE will face in the coming three years:**

The challenges of the Southern District and ITE, in general, are not new and not unique. All organizations struggle for relevancy and efficacy. Every professional association like SDITE needs to re-define itself every few years so that what it provides to its members is fresh and significant to their professional needs. For example, Zoom and YouTube allow us to connect with our members who cannot travel – whether because of ever-restrictive budgets or time constraints. What a great opportunity for which many of the Sections

have taken advantage to remain relevant in new ways. We should look for more opportunities to keep ITE valuable.

The “new-norm” of work-from-anywhere means that we may have colleagues who live in Arizona or Michigan but are primarily supporting their companies in Alabama or Virginia, for example. They could be active in ITE in their area or they could take a stronger role within SDITE. We may also have the opposite type of professional within our midst – those that choose to live and frolic in the South but work for a company in California or New York. By providing opportunities for those individuals to be involved, we promote ITE and expand our reach.

The specialization within our industry has, in a way, divided our members by placing them in “camps” – the TSMO camps, the safety camps, planning, design, transit, active transportation, etc. As a generalist with a wide variety of experience in all areas of transportation, I’m troubled by this. Imagine a neurosurgeon who can’t diagnose a flu or a defense attorney who can’t write a will. While most of us do eventually gravitate to areas we enjoy, it is still important for those who practice in the field to be at least competent in it. ITE can play a role in providing and encouraging a broad spectrum of education.