



Bentley Systems Turns AASHTO Student TRAC Bridge Contest into a Virtual Event

June 11, 2020

Originally Scheduled to Present in Kansas City, Middle and High School Students from Several States Pivoted to Showcase Bridge Design Projects in a Virtual Setting

EXTON, Pa. – June 11, 2020 – Bentley Systems, Incorporated, a leading global provider of comprehensive software and digital twin cloud services for the design, construction, and operations of infrastructure, and the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), a nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing highway and transportation departments in the United States, this year presented the annual Transportation and Civil Engineering (TRAC) contest for middle and high school students in a virtual setting. Originally scheduled to be held during AASHTO's spring meeting in Kansas City, organizers re-invented the competition as the "AASHTO Virtual TRAC Showcase" as a result of COVID-19 social-distancing restrictions.

The Bentley-sponsored AASHTO National Bridge and Structure TRAC Bridge Challenge invites students from 7th-12th grades to design innovative bridge projects using Bentley applications. This year, 18 finalist teams were selected. However, when AASHTO made the difficult decision not to hold the event in person, Bentley partnered with AASHTO to host the "Virtual TRAC Showcase" on June 3. While only 12 of the 18 teams could present in the online forum, it served as an opportunity to recognize students for their hard work, allowing them to present virtually their projects in front of parents, teachers, sponsors, state departments of transportation, and AASHTO members.

The winning teams from Maryland, Virginia, Michigan, and Mississippi, with names including "The Suspension Is Killing Me," "Bridge O Matics," and "Cable Stayed Mustangs," presented their bridge projects designed using Bentley software that included MicroStation, OpenRoads, and ContextCapture. The 10-minute presentations allowed each team to demonstrate how they designed the bridges and built models of their designs with balsawood. Each member of the 12 teams received a certificate and gift card provided by Bentley Systems, Michael Baker International, and TopoDOT to acknowledge the students for their outstanding work.

Francois Valois, Bentley's vice president for civil engineering, said, "The role of civil engineers is critical to transportation infrastructure. The hands-on experience of the TRAC program introduces students to civil engineering concepts and processes and inspires them to imagine a future career in engineering. I'm proud that AASHTO, Bentley, and the DOTs came together to provide this opportunity for the students to present their projects virtually and get the recognition that they deserve."

Linda Clifton, AASHTO TRAC program manager, said AASHTO designed the program for use in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) classes to introduce students to transportation and civil engineering. "America's transportation industry has a huge demand for well-qualified civil engineers. TRAC's goal is to get middle and high school students exposed to and excited about a career in civil engineering. We see TRAC as an investment in today's youth, to ensure that America has the highly-skilled workforce it's going to need for years to come."

If this year's TRAC teams are any indication, the program has met its stated goal. One of the 12th-grade students said, "I started the program with an interest in civil engineering and ended with a love for it. TRAC was probably the best way to prepare me for a future as a civil engineer."

To download videos of the award presentations, please visit the [Bentley-sponsored AASHTO National Bridge and Structure TRAC Bridge Showcase](#).

Image: [AASHTO Virtual TRAC Showcase](#)

Caption: Bentley Systems turns AASHTO Student TRAC Bridge Contest into a virtual event

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About AASHTO

AASHTO is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing highway and transportation departments in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. It represents all transportation modes, including air, highways, public transportation, active transportation, rail, and water. Its primary goal is to foster the development, operation, and maintenance of an integrated national transportation system.

TRAC™ (Transportation and Civil Engineering) & RIDES (Roadways In Developing Elementary Students), AASHTO's educational outreach programs, are designed for use in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) classes. The hands-on activities introduce students in grades K-12 to the work world of transportation and civil engineering and inspire them to consider careers in those fields. State departments of transportation work with schools in their state by providing the curricula and resources for the schools and providing engineers to visit the classrooms to serve as speakers, teach a hands-on activity, and/or talk to students about the importance of math and science in preparing for their future. <https://tracrides.transportation.org/>

About Bentley Systems

Bentley Systems is a leading global provider of software solutions to engineers, architects, geospatial professionals, constructors, and owner-operators for the design, construction, and operations of infrastructure. Bentley's *MicroStation*-based engineering and BIM applications, and its digital twin cloud services, advance the project delivery (*ProjectWise*) and the asset performance (*AssetWise*) of transportation and other public works, utilities, industrial and resources plants, and commercial and institutional facilities.

Bentley Systems employs more than 3,500 colleagues and generates annual revenues of more than \$700 million in 172 countries. From inception in 1984, the company has remained majority-owned by its five founding Bentley brothers. www.bentley.com

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