

ENR Southwest

ENR Southwest's 2023 Top Young Pros

As part of its annual Top Young Professionals contest, ENR Southwest recognizes 20 up-and-coming leaders for their on-the-job achievements and contributions to their companies and communities

By Nancy Kristof, Scott Judy



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A safety manager who found his current role after a colleague offered him a challenge. An emerging technology leader, born in Bangladesh, who's now helping lead projects across the Southwest. A department manager who helped double her group's revenue in just one year. A college student

who traveled to New Orleans to help with Hurricane Katrina recovery who is now a transportation emergency management leader for HDR. A construction manager who has overseen more than 100 projects and volunteers as part of Engineers Without Borders.

That is just a sampling of the impressive—and often inspiring—talent represented and being recognized here in ENR Southwest’s 2023 class of Top Young Professionals.

Firms from Arizona, Nevada and New Mexico submitted entries to this year’s contest. The annual competition recognizes up-and-coming construction industry professionals who exhibit notable achievements in terms of career and industry leadership, community service and creating landmark projects for the region.

A team of independent industry judges was split into teams to tackle the numerous entries and did not score any applicants with whom they might have had a conflict of interest.

This year’s judging panel included: Scott Elliot, director of business development with EPS Group Inc.; Ali Fakih, principal, Sustainability Engineering Group (SEG); Erica Lange, vice president, Arizona Builders Alliance; and Ben Mlinar, project executive, Rosendin.

Winners from each regional class will be put forward for consideration in the national round of judging, which will decide ENR’s 2023 Top 20 Under 40. The national winners will be celebrated at ENR’s annual Top Young Professionals conference, which will be held March 8-10 in New Orleans.

And while the construction industry continues to face a wide array of challenges, it’s reassuring to learn that such considerable talent—as represented here—is already at work across the Southwest.

Sugar Martin Avina

38, Safety Manager

Hensel Phelps

Phoenix



Avina is a safety manager at Hensel Phelps. His career in construction began as a laborer more than 12 years ago. Known for his interest in safety, a colleague provided Avina with a list of safety courses along with a message: “If you complete these classes within a year, call me.” Avina did just that and was offered an entry-level safety coordinator position with Hensel Phelps. There, he pursued additional education and earned his Construction Health and Safety Technician (CHST) certification. Since joining Hensel Phelps, Avina has searched for ways to improve the contractor’s outcomes by implementing programs that make projects safer. He helped transform its “near miss” reporting into a positive rewards program, developed a “good catch” program that tracks trends and provides proactive solutions, and established the company’s SAFE bracket

Tremain Roseman*37, Project Manager***Giroux Glass Inc.*****Las Vegas***

Roseman dreamed of becoming an architect during childhood. His early training as a drafter eventually led to a career as a project manager helping deliver glazing systems on some of Las Vegas' most challenging projects. His AEC career took a detour from 2008 to 2014, when Roseman served as a combat engineer in the U.S. Army. There, he led a team of enlisted soldiers and developed leadership skills. After returning to the construction industry, he worked as a junior engineer for a glazing company in Fairbanks, Alaska. He transitioned to the Las Vegas office of Giroux Glass in 2018, where today he serves as project manager and sells multimillion-dollar project scopes as an estimator. His clear communications and effective methods are often credited by general contractor teams when it comes to solving conflicts and issues. The leadership skills he developed in the army helps him maintain self-improvement initiatives at Giroux today. He is currently finalizing a new process to streamline information for shop drawing protocols and is an active participant on the Giroux innovation committee. Roseman's current project duties involve the management of Giroux's scope on the first of three Culinary Health Foundation buildings in Las Vegas.

Sean Samsel*39, Vice President, Regional Manager***Psomas*****Tucson***

Samsel started his career at Psomas as an intern 17 years ago. Today, Samsel is a vice president and principal of Psomas. Based in Tucson, Samsel is a regional manager overseeing an office of 50 local team members, including three direct reports. He manages a wide range of public works projects, including major arterial construction, local roadway widening and reconstruction, pedestrian improvements, linear park paths and underpasses, intersection reconstructions and roundabouts. His notable projects include the \$50-million Tangerine Road project, a five-mile, multijurisdictional road widening project that included a median, bike lanes, a multiuse path and wildlife connectivity. Samsel holds an MBA in finance from the University of Arizona and has been directly involved with the company's retirement committee, helping to improve the employee stock ownership plan for all employees. He's also the chairman of the Psomas diversity, inclusion and belonging committee. A certified Envision Sustainability Professional by the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure, Samsel's established a reputation as an

program, which tracks safety trends, engagement, number of observations and project goals. Every week teams either move on or are eliminated, and a team SAFE bracket champion, which receives gift cards or other incentives, is crowned every month. Avina is active with the Associated General Contractors Builders Safety Committee and is a member of the AGC Mental Health and Wellness committee, where he is bringing awareness of available mental health training to trade partners.

Tyler Besch

39, Vice President

AECOM

Phoenix



Besch is a 16-year industry veteran. After graduating cum laude with a bachelor's degree in urban planning from Arizona State University in 2006, he began his career as a land developer in Phoenix. He joined URS (now part of AECOM) in 2008, working his way up to vice president and serving as part of the leadership team for AECOM's transit-rail division. This includes responsibility for projects across states in the Western U.S. He is part of a leadership team responsible for delivering more than \$200 million in annual revenue while managing a staff of more than 200 people. His responsibilities include business development, project management and delivery of key operational performance metrics. He aims to deliver sustainable solutions for multimodal infrastructure planning and design at state and national levels. He works on a variety of projects, including transit and multimodal studies, corridor profile studies and large-scale multimodal corridor alternatives analyses. He played a key role in the development of a new performance-based planning approach for the Arizona Dept. of Transportation. The program pairs existing infrastructure data on pavement, bridge, mobility, safety and freight conditions to streamline capital program investment decisions. He is active in the American Public Transportation Association and American Planning Association at both the national and local levels, often presenting at conferences.

Brittany Burbes

34, Project Executive

DPR Construction

Phoenix



Burbes' more than 14 years of AEC experience includes a focus on health care. She's supported more than \$600 million of hospital projects in Arizona, including the Banner University Medical Center in Tucson and the Banner Good Samaritan Medical Center Operating Room

Expansion and Renovation in Phoenix. She currently serves as project executive for the Banner Desert Medical Center Women's Tower Expansion in Mesa. This 170,000-sq-ft, five-story vertical expansion will house new labor and delivery services as well as medical-surgical patient rooms. Burbes led the preconstruction collaboration between the two general contractor teams on the project, identifying opportunities to simplify procurement and increase the buying power of Banner Health. She often shares her health care expertise, training more than 70 DPR employees on infection control and interim life safety best practices. Burbes takes advantage of virtual design and construction and offsite prefabrication strategies to minimize disruption to existing hospital operations.

Rumpa Dey

37, Emerging Technology Leader/Group Manager

AECOM

Phoenix



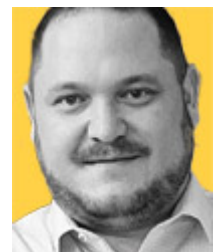
Dey is the Arizona emerging technology leader/group manager at AECOM. Her 15 years of experience includes planning and designing of intelligent transportation systems (ITS), traffic engineering design, modeling and operations, roadway safety and enhanced multimodal mobility, broadband, communications and smart lighting. She has managed, led or been actively involved with more than 50 projects valued at more than \$5 billion in construction costs for a variety of contract deliveries for several state DOTs, local agencies and private clients. A licensed professional engineer in several states, Dey is also a professional traffic operations engineer. She has designed hundreds of miles of ITS and 90-plus traffic signals. Examples of her recent projects include Arizona State Route 202 South Mountain, City of Tempe Streetcar, Valley Metro's Light Rail Extension and Texas DOT's New Freeway Oak Hill. She is involved with the Intelligent Transportation Society of Arizona and ITS America and is an active member of the Institute of Transportation Engineers. Born and raised in Bangladesh, Dey obtained the ninth merit position among more than 150,000 students in 12th grade exams in her region. She was also awarded \$100,000 for graduate studies by the Schlumberger Foundation Paris.

Eric Geisler

39, Director

Shawmut Design and Construction

Las Vegas



Described as an “inherent leader,” Geisler began to gain notice while working as an assistant project manager by creating a “builder’s book” for the Cheesecake Factory account as it expanded nationwide. Geisler’s work document included deep dives into processes, lessons learned and standard details that he continuously updated and utilized for onboarding team members. The document proved especially valuable in enabling Shawmut to efficiently and effectively scale up with the growing account. Geisler has taken on a wide range of positions in his career to date, ranging from estimating to tasks in the field, helping develop his ability to manage different roles and personalities that come together to form a project team. With that broad experience, Geisler has leveraged this perspective to help his company streamline how field and office operations teams share information, putting processes in place to enable the efficient and continuous sharing of information. Additionally, according to Shawmut’s nomination, Geisler “has an inherent ability to understand people’s needs without them being expressed, and works as a true partner to address those needs.” Recognized as a top performer and rising leader, Geisler was part of Shawmut’s leadership development program, a two-year-long initiative that focuses on building leadership skills.

Andrew Gillet

39, Vice President

McCarthy Building Cos.

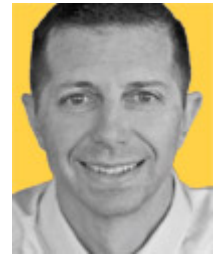
Phoenix



Andrew Gillet’s 10-plus year experience at McCarthy led to his most recent promotion to vice president of preconstruction. He leads a team that produces nearly \$1 billion in revenue annually for the firm’s Southwest region commercial group. Gillet’s efforts are credited with helping the team grow from eight to 25 professionals in the past 10 years. Gillet works across several market sectors, including renewable energy, higher education, health care and commercial. Gillet made a strong impression to management as an innovative problem-solver on his first project at McCarthy. He proposed and developed a way for the firm to expand its self-perform services on solar projects to include pile-driving. This saved hundreds of thousands in costs on the project while helping raise McCarthy’s profile in renewable energy, expand its capabilities and generate additional revenue. Gillet also led a three-year companywide initiative to define and document preconstruction delivery processes and procedures. His notable projects include Arizona State University’s new ISTB-7 and the University of Arizona’s Applied Research Building.

Tamara Hashimoto*31, Geotechnical Department Manager***Terracon Consultants*****Las Vegas***

A straight-A student and high school valedictorian, Hashimoto was granted a full scholarship into the President's Scholarship Program at California State University, Long Beach. She joined Terracon during her senior year of college and continues her work there today. She has been promoted five times in seven years, with her most recent promotion to the position of geotechnical department manager. In her first year in this role, Hashimoto helped to more than double the department's revenue and grew its staffing from four people to nine. The achievement was among the reasons leading to her selection into Terracon's Rising Stars program. A solar subject matter expert for the firm, Hashimoto reviews proposals, data, engineering analysis design and reports and provides technical expertise on projects across the nation. In 2019, she was awarded Terracon's Living Our Values – Technical Professional award for her work ethic, dedication to her projects and for embodying the company's purpose, vision and values.

Bill Hornaday*39, Senior Project Manager***The Weitz Co.*****Phoenix***

A senior project manager with the Weitz Co., Hornaday graduated with a civil engineering degree from Gonzaga University in 2006. He began his career with Weitz in high school, working as a weekend laborer and later completing an internship with the firm. Since joining Weitz full time as a project engineer, he's steadily moved up the ladder. Now a senior project manager, he is often tasked with leading complicated projects due to his attention to project operations. He participates in a national peer group responsible for creating career development plans for all positions within Weitz. Additionally, Hornaday serves as the local safety committee chair and is responsible for leading the development of project engineers within the Southwest region. He also leads monthly training meetings with young professionals, helping establish a safe place for them to share their current experiences and challenges. He is a member of the Arizona Builder's Alliance (ABA) Education Committee, where he shares his background in payment terms to teach classes on the subject for its project manager development program. Hornaday completed ABA's Leadership Development Forum in 2016.

Tory Jackson*35, Transportation Emergency Management Lead***HDR*****Las Vegas***

Jackson's college trip to help with Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts inspired her to pursue a civil engineering degree so she could help assist communities during vulnerable times. After graduation and upon joining HDR, Jackson was able to create a role for herself as the firm's transportation emergency management lead and today is a recognized expert at providing emergency management services. Jackson has helped public agencies and municipalities from Alaska to Florida meet federal and state funding requirements for reimbursement after natural disasters, including hurricanes, wildfires, earthquakes, landslides and flooding. Her most recent work focused on Alaska earthquake and storm recovery efforts. After a week of historic rainfall in 2020, she helped the Alaska Dept. of Transportation and Public Facilities respond by leading a team to stand up a GIS-based application for deployment to field resources, which helped the client meet federal funding requirements. Jackson gives back to the community by mentoring younger professionals as well as through STEM outreach at the K-12 level. She serves as a formal mentor through HDR's women's employee network group and Nevada's Young Professional Group.

Aaron Ketner*32, Director of Sustainability***Dekker/Perich/Sabatini*****Albuquerque***

Ketner is the director of sustainability at Dekker/Perich/Sabatini, where he established its building performance analysis team. During his pursuit of a master's degree in architecture from the University of New Mexico, Ketner focused on energy awareness and microgrids, conducting research on the correlations between energy efficiency and sustainable design. He was subsequently awarded the Alpha Rho Chi medal in recognition of academic excellence, leadership and service. Today, he works across disciplines at DPS as a project manager, educating both clients and staff on sustainable principles and building performance analysis. He helped lead efforts to expand the firm's service offerings to include smart building technology, automation and digital twin asset management, providing new revenue streams. Ketner is a WELL accredited professional and LEED Green Associate. Among Ketner's high-profile work is the net-positive energy Kirtland Resiliency Project, completed in collaboration with Emera Technologies and the U.S. Departments of Energy and Defense.

Kimberly Martin

39, Senior Engineer

Keller

Phoenix



Martin has more than 15 years of experience in the geotechnical industry. Her studies led her to a career path as a technical lead for ExxonMobil Development Co., where she defined geotechnical and civil scopes for onshore and offshore projects. Upon leaving oil and gas to pursue her doctorate at Arizona State University, Martin shifted her focus to researching enzyme-induced carbonate precipitation as a sustainable ground improvement technology. Martin joined Keller in 2020 and began using that research to improve innovation and sustainability on geotechnical scopes. In her role as senior engineer, Martin looks for ways to reduce environmental impacts on Keller projects across North America. She is credited with improving the company's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and culture within her short tenure at the firm. She launched unconscious bias training for the firm's senior leadership. She participates in the Keller women in construction affinity group and the industrywide Construction Inclusion Week, developing a communications program, toolbox talks and encouraging inclusive behavior across teams.

Andrew Moreno

32, Assistant traffic group manager

AZTEC Engineering Group

Phoenix



An assistant traffic engineer and project manager at AZTEC Engineering group, Moreno has worked on several challenging accelerated design-build projects in Arizona and outside the state. He joined AZTEC as a traffic designer two years after graduating from Arizona State University in 2012. He's been involved with some of the Southwest's largest infrastructure projects, including providing lighting design for the South Mountain Freeway project, work on the Interstate-15 Express Lanes project and involvement with design-build multimodal corridor enhancements to US-50 in California. Moreno's work with the local chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers includes service as president of its Younger Member Forum, where he helped raise a record \$12,000 toward scholarships for engineering students in 2020-2021. He also helps mentor those who are just getting started in their careers, serving for four years as the professional engineer review course chair supporting those pursuing completion of their licensing

exams. “He always has a smile on his face and warm encouragement for others,” coworkers said. He is also a graduate of American Council of Engineering Companies Arizona’s Leadership in Engineering Administration Program.

Sanjay Paul

37, Area Traffic Business Class Leader

HDR

Albuquerque



Sanjay Paul holds a doctorate and master’s degree from Arizona State University and a bachelor’s degree from Bangladesh. He serves as HDR’s traffic business class leader for its desert Southwest area, which includes New Mexico and Arizona. His team is recognized as one of the best performing teams in the area and has nearly doubled in size since Paul joined HDR, says the firm. A licensed professional engineer and professional traffic operations engineer, Paul is also a professional transportation planner and road safety professional. He has more than 15 years of experience in traffic engineering, transportation planning, multimodal safety and traffic technologies. Paul is focused on sustainability planning, ensuring that accessibility and safety are available to all roadway users. His experience at the Arizona Dept. of Transportation helps him navigate between public and private sectors. He contributed to the development of the Institute of Transportation Engineers Parking Generation Manual 5th Edition, which is used by traffic engineers and planners across the country. He has managed, led or contributed to more than 80 projects. His recent notable projects include the Maricopa Association of Governments’ Autonomous Vehicle Pilot deployment in Peoria, Ariz. Paul is an active member of Institute of Transportation Engineers, Intelligent Transportation Society Arizona, International Municipal Signal Association, American Society of Civil Engineers and American Society of Highway Engineers.

Riley Rasmussen

37, Project Director

Barker Contracting Inc.

Tucson



Rasmussen is a fourth-generation builder who built his first project at the age of six: a sturdy three-story fort. Later he helped his father’s business by building decks and working his way up to assistant superintendent. He opted out of his junior and senior years of high school to achieve an associate’s degree at age 17. He interned for a company that built amusement parks

and was quickly promoted, eventually running a 25-person crew. After returning to his father's company and continuing his studies at University of Washington, Rasmussen relocated to Tucson to begin a career as a transportation planner with the Pima Association of Governments. He transitioned to a project management role at Barker Contracting and in 2019 was promoted to project director, a position that oversees all work being performed by the company in the Arizona market. In this role, he manages five project managers, an assistant project manager and an intern and oversees business development and marketing for the \$70-million company. During his six years as a Barker Contracting project manager, he's helped the company land its largest project to date at that time: a \$15-million high-tech manufacturing facility for a space tourism company. As project director, Rasmussen helped Barker Contracting grow and be recognized as one of ENR Southwest's Top Contractors.

Dustin Ridley

39, Southwest VDC Leader

DPR Construction

Phoenix



Ridley leads a team of 45 virtual design and construction (VDC) professionals across DPR's Arizona and Central California region. He uses his VDC and building information modeling expertise to improve project management, process workflow and construction technology deployment. He is a member of the firm's companywide VDC leaders team, helping advance long-term initiatives and implement best practices for extended reality. This includes efforts to broaden VDC support to smaller projects by introducing a regional VDC role. Ridley is credited with helping to grow his department from 30 to 45 in the past four years. He partners with industry organizations and programs to ensure VDC training reaches tradespeople. He helped create a teaching role and led training at the Phoenix Electrical Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee for more than six years. His efforts to bring BIM education to the trade level included travel to Pune, India, where he helped provide an electrical trade level perspective of BIM modeling and best practices to vConstruct, a strategic partner of DPR Construction. He trained its MEP team on needs and expectations for electrical BIM modeling. He also serves on Tucson's PIMA College CAD Advisory Board, where he provides his perspective as an industry professional to students interested in construction careers. His key projects include the ASU Health Futures Center, the Mayo Clinic West Expansion Tower and the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Air Traffic Control Tower.

expert in designing roundabouts for challenging locations. He is the recipient of the 2021 Outstanding Young Alumni Award from University of Arizona's Department of Civil & Architectural Engineering and Mechanics. He often presents to senior capstone classes and is involved in the University of Arizona student chapter of the American Society of Engineers.

Curtis Smith

38, Project Controls Manager

Sundt Construction Inc.

Tempe, Ariz.



Smith began his career in the construction industry after enlisting in the Arizona Army National Guard as a heavy equipment operator in 2002. He was soon deployed to support operations in Iraq, building infrastructure that moved civilians and supply lines throughout the country. Upon returning to the U.S. in 2005, he pursued a construction management degree, eventually graduating with honors from the Del E. Webb School of Construction at Arizona State University. After a promotion to the rank of sergeant in the National Guard in 2010, he joined a small Arizona-based contractor, performing duties as an estimator and project engineer. In 2012, he was called to a second deployment, this time to Afghanistan as a staff sergeant. There he led a squad of 10 soldiers in a variety of military and community-based missions from infrastructure to training local populations in heavy equipment operations. Smith returned to resume his construction career at Sundt. During his seven years there, he's served both in operations and as a senior estimator leading projects valued up to \$100 million. Today, Smith is a project controls manager leading front-line support for all project functions. He led a team effort to develop new tools that combine data from different systems within Sundt, aggregating daily data into visual key metrics that provide insight into trends and challenges. These tools have since been adopted across the entire Sundt organization.

Gregg Stoneham

39, Project Superintendent

Hensel Phelps

Phoenix



Stoneham got his start in construction digging house foundations for his father's business at age 16. Now, 23 years later, Stoneham is a 16-year veteran at Hensel Phelps, where he has worked on projects across the U.S. His portfolio includes more than a billion dollars' worth of work, including train yards, hotels, prisons, high-rises, military bases, hospitals and semiconductor

facilities. He currently serves as project superintendent on the \$92-million Valley Metro Operations and Maintenance Center Expansion in Phoenix. This design-build project requires navigating multiple stakeholder groups to meet safety and scheduling milestones on a complex project with zero shutdowns of revenue service to the light rail system. The program developed on this project has since been incorporated by Valley Metro for all future work requiring switching power on maintenance facility sites. Heavily influenced by a vocational technical teacher after moving across the country in high school, Stoneham aims to return the favor to future generations interested in construction by mentoring high school students through the ACE Mentor Program once a week. He not only helps train them on different technical topics within construction but also helps prepare them for competitive presentations. He also often lends his skills to local Habitat for Humanity projects.

Laura Toprowski

31, Department Manager, Construction

Burns & McDonnell

Phoenix



As the department manager for Burns & McDonnell's Phoenix-area construction group, Toprowski leads the firm's construction efforts on projects across the Southwest. She built her reputation managing more than 100 projects ranging in value from \$1.5 million to \$350 million. Today, Toprowski helps the firm's clients execute infrastructure programs such as rebuilding electric grids, enabling renewable interconnection, installing solar farms or upgrading natural gas pipelines. Toprowski was just one of two individuals tasked with developing HDR's program to sustainably improve the electric grid when launched in 2021. A year later, the team has grown to more than 100 individuals supporting projects across the Southwest. Her daily responsibilities include managing construction projects, overseeing her vast team of construction and engineering professionals and mentoring women in construction. She is a certified construction management professional as well as a member of Engineers Without Borders and Women in Construction. She regularly contributes to Habitat for Humanity projects and looks for opportunities to mentor and encourage the next generation of STEM professionals. She also keeps a pulse on the firm's client base by serving as program manager for Public Service New Mexico (PNM), helping PNM execute its 20-year capital improvement plans to modernize power infrastructure across New Mexico.

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