

2024 CO/WY ITE Section Officer Candidate Biographies



Secretary/Treasurer - Stefan Escanes, PE, PTOE

Stefan is a Transportation Planning Manager at Metric Engineering, Inc.

Hello all! I am Stefan Escanes and I am running for the ITE CO/WY Section Secretary/Treasurer position. I currently serve as transportation planning manager at Metric Engineering. I began my career working on NEPA Projects which allowed me to understand the importance of early engagement of the public to deliver innovative solutions that meet traffic and safety needs as well as community consensus. Over my 14-year career, my background expanded to the various facets of transportation engineering including experience with performing Multimodal & TSM&O Master Plans, Traffic Operations & Safety Studies, Interchange Access Requests, Signalization Design, Design-Build Smart Work Zones, and more. Throughout my career, I have always had a passion for learning new areas of our vast engineering field and researching how we can continuously improve the mobility and safety of our transportation networks.

My engagement in engineering organizations began at Florida International University (FIU) where I first participated in ASCE competitions and subsequently served as Vice President of Student Affairs for the FIU Chapter in 2010. As I began my career, I remained a member of ASCE and recently joined ITE in 2020 while sitting for my Professional Traffic Operations Engineer license. Since moving to Colorado in 2021, I have really enjoyed attending the ITE events (large and small!) and meeting the CO/WY Section community, which could not have been more welcoming! As I live and work in Colorado Springs, I am part of the (new) Southern Colorado ITE Chapter, and I am both eager and excited at the opportunity to serve on the ITE CO/WY Section executive board as a representative for ITE from Southern Colorado.

Outside of engineering, I always stay active doing activities with my wife and two kids as a family. We regularly go hiking, camping, skiing, and travel whenever we can to share new experiences with the little ones! Some of my favorite moments include the simplicities of just walking through Garden of the Gods as my son explores the surroundings and my daughter learns to walk.

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Secretary/Treasurer - Josh Hoffmann, PE

Josh is a Traffic Engineer at HDR.

Hello ITE Colorado Wyoming Section members! My name is Josh Hoffmann, and I'm thrilled to announce my candidacy for the four-year leadership track, starting with Secretary-Treasurer and culminating as Past President.

I received both my undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, specializing in traffic engineering. My professional journey began in Wisconsin, where I worked for three years. I then moved to Texas, contributing there for five years, before fulfilling a long-held aspiration to make Colorado my home. After nearly two years of acclimating to the local community and culture, I'm eager to contribute my accumulated task leadership and project management skills to our Section.

My focus, if elected, will be to build upon the strong foundation set by our current leadership team, emphasizing financial transparency, robust member engagement, and fostering a cooperative atmosphere among board members. I see ITE not merely as a networking opportunity but as a vital platform for exchanging ideas, learning, and creating a cohesive community.

On a personal note, I moved here with my wife and young daughter, and we're deeply invested in our local community. When I'm not engrossed in traffic simulations or spreadsheets, I enjoy spending time with my family on mountain hikes and picnics in the summer and being slope-side with them in winter.

I'm excited about the possibility of serving this Section, which has already given me so much in terms of professional growth and a sense of community. I would be honored to have your vote and appreciate your consideration.

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Vice President - Melissa Gende, PE, PTOE, RSP1

Melissa currently serves as the Secretary/Treasurer of the CO/WY ITE Section. She is a Traffic Operations and Technology Engineer at CDOT.

Melissa is a traffic operations and technology engineer at the Colorado Department of Transportation. She started her current position with the State after spending seven years in consulting working primarily in Florida, Georgia, and Colorado. She has a strong background in transportation planning and traffic analysis projects. She obtained her bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering from Clemson University in 2013 and 2015.

Melissa has been actively involved in ITE since joining the student chapter at Clemson University where she served as the president of the student chapter and competed in the Traffic Bowl for two years. She continued her involvement in ITE after graduation and served several roles within the Georgia section including as a member of the technical committee and chair of the traffic bowl committee. She was also in the Southern District where she was a member of the young member committee. As a member of the Colorado/Wyoming section Melissa has served as chair of the activities committee and is currently the secretary-treasurer of the section. She is also currently serving as chair of the communications committee for the Mountain District. She was named the Mountain District ITE Rising Star in 2023.

Melissa is honored to be nominated for the role of Vice President of the CO/WY section and is committed to continuing her service to the Colorado-Wyoming section by working to bring value to our section's members and sponsors through hosting relevant and engaging technical and social events. She is passionate about supporting others and hopes to continue to do so in her role as section Vice President.

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President - Rae Stephani, PE, PTOE, RSP1

Rae currently serves as the Vice President of the CO/WY ITE Section. She is a Project Manager at Y2K Engineering, LLC.

Rae Stephani, PE, PTOE, RSP₁ is a project manager at Y2K Engineering. Rae has been involved in ITE since she was an undergrad at Northern Arizona University and knows the importance this organization can have on a career. Rae moved to Colorado from Arizona with the opening of Y2K's Denver office in 2020, and shortly after became involved in the CO/WY ITE section, where she was elected secretary/treasurer in 2021.

Rae's professional background is focused on the mobility of all roadway users with an emphasis on transportation safety and multimodal planning and design. At Y2K, Rae has been involved in many successful corridor planning studies and design projects with a focus on improving the safety and connectivity of the multimodal network. Rae is passionate about data driven analysis and has experience leveraging technology to develop software tools that have real-time data connections, respond to changing variables, and display interactive dashboards for visualization of data. Aside from her engineering pursuits, Rae enjoys spending time outside with her husband, toddler, and dogs. They are adding another kiddo to the mix this November. Rae is an enthusiastic hiker, runner, camper, kayaker, hunter, and lover of all things outdoors.

Rae is passionate about cultivating involvement in professional organizations and providing support to students in the early stages their career. In 2020/2021, Rae taught a traffic engineering course at Northern Arizona University and has continued to support the NAU ITE student chapter with presentations and facilitating student internships. Rae understands the importance of ITE as a tool to build relationships and share ideas. As Vice President, Rae worked with Northern Colorado members to facilitate a northern luncheon for the first time since COVID to expand CO/WY ITE member opportunities. As president, Rae is committed to continuing to identify opportunities to increase participation by supporting the board and executive committee in their efforts to put on events and activities that are fun, engaging and provide value to participants.

Rae is approachable, outgoing, organized, and ready to take on this role. She is excited to continue to serve the CO/WY section and thankful for your consideration to vote for her as your next president.

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Past President - Cara O'Donnell, PE, PTOE, RSP1

Cara currently serves as the President of the CO/WY ITE Section. She is a Traffic/ITS Engineer at IronStride Solutions.

Hello! I am Cara O'Donnell – a Traffic/ITS Engineer at IronStride Solutions and the current Colorado/Wyoming ITE Section's President. I graduated from Virginia Tech with a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering in 2011 and worked outside Washington, DC for the following few years. I chased the bigger mountains and better snow to Colorado as quickly as I could, which has been a great decision both personally and professionally. I have had a blend of public and private sector experience throughout my career and enjoy finding and overcoming new challenges in each role. My position at IronStride has allowed me the opportunity to work on a variety of projects throughout the state of Colorado. I find it exciting to be involved with several of the large projects that influence the travel patterns of myself and many people that I know on a regular basis, but I also find it very rewarding to work on smaller projects that can have a major impact on local communities.

My involvement with ITE has steadily progressed over the years and has been increasingly rewarding with every new position! I am looking forward to continuing to serve the Colorado/Wyoming ITE Section as the Past President in 2024 and find more ways to give back to this community! I am passionate about making this community the best that it can be. It has treated me so well throughout my career, and I hope to help continue to provide that to other transportation professionals as I wrap up my tenure on the Board. I would really appreciate your vote!