

NEWS RELEASE – September 10, 2026

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Innovation in Underground Construction to Take Center Stage at Cutting Edge 2026

From November 9-11 in Arlington, VA, the Underground Construction Association (UCA), in partnership with the North American Tunneling Journal, will host the 14th Cutting Edge Conference. This annual event examines the latest advances in tunneling technology, its methodology and how it can be harnessed to assist major underground projects.

The keynote session on Monday, November 9 includes presentations by CBNA tackling unique drill and blast tunnels in a densely populated area, and a presentation from Lombardi Engineering, covering the challenges of tunneling in the heart of the Swiss Alps.



Alexandre Chaizemartin, Technical Director, CBNA

Hong Kong's Central Kowloon Route: Unique Drill & Blast Tunnels in a Densely Populated Area



Eric Carrera, Engineering Project Manager, Lombardi Engineering Ltd.

The Second Tube of the Gotthard Road Tunnel – Challenging Tunnelling in the Heart of the Swiss Alps

“The uniqueness of Cutting Edge is that we are bringing in people from all over the world to talk about things that are currently in practice,” said Maria Chastka, Cutting Edge Program Chair and Senior Project Engineer at Granite Construction. “Our goal for this conference is to help all aspects of a job site perform better, find more efficiencies, and improve the bottom line.”

In addition to high-end technical sessions, Cutting Edge 2026 attendees will have the opportunity to attend one of two [regional field trips](#) on Wednesday, November 11. Field trip registration is limited and available on a first come, first served basis.

One trip is to DC Water’s [Potomac River Tunnel Project](#), including direct access to two TBM tunnels expected to resume mining operations shortly after the visit. Attendees will observe live construction operations across the full project footprint, including the slurry treatment plant, water treatment plant, grout plant, and TBM auxiliary equipment and support systems.

The other field trip will take attendees to the [Ellicott City Extended North Tunnel](#), the largest public works project in the history of Howard County, Maryland. At 150 feet underground, the one-mile, 18-foot-diameter granite tunnel will divert up to 26,000 gallons of stormwater per second away from Main Street directly into the Patapsco River.

The UCA is supporting 10 students to attend the 2026 Cutting Edge Conference. [Attendance scholarships](#) generously cover registration and travel expenses. Applications are due by October 4.

Registration for Cutting Edge 2026 is now open. For more information about the conference, visit ucaofsmecuttingedge.com.

About UCA

The Underground Construction Association, a Division of SME (UCA) brings together tunneling’s brightest and most dedicated professionals. Global association members advance their careers with world-class technical resources, educational programs, networking opportunities and professional development tools from UCA. Our members are focused on sharing best practices

in safety, environmental stewardship and technological advancements. UCA. *Inspiring tunneling professionals worldwide.*