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UCA Now Accepting Nominations for Industry-Leading 2027 Awards Program



The UCA Awards Class of 2026 posing with their awards at the North American Tunneling Conference (NAT 2026) alongside Mike Bruen (right), Past Chair of the UCA Awards Committee

At next year's Rapid Excavation and Tunneling Conference® (RETC) in New Orleans, LA, the Underground Construction Association (UCA) will welcome its next class of award recipients. UCA Awards recognize the professionals and project teams making a measurable impact across underground construction. Recognition goes beyond an award. It elevates careers, highlights innovation, and inspires the next generation of underground construction professionals.

"An annual UCA Awards Celebration serves as one of our most important events in terms of shedding light on the often underappreciated yet absolutely essential work of underground

innovators,” said Jon Hurt, Arup Fellow and Principal (Tunnels), Arup and Chair of the UCA Awards Committee. “We look forward to recognizing another outstanding class of awardees at RETC 2027 amongst a large audience of the industry’s best and brightest.”

The following 2027 UCA Awards are now [open for nominations](#) through **November 10, 2026**:

Lifetime Achievement Award

The UCA Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes individuals with outstanding achievements in the underground design and construction industry accomplished through design and/or construction of civil underground facilities.

2026 recipients: Jerome P. Shaw, President, SAK LLC; Amanda Elioff, Sr. Vice President, National Practice Lead - Tunnels, WSP USA; Thomas J. Clemens, President of North American Tunneling, DSI Underground (retired)

Muddy Boots Award

The UCA Muddy Boots Award is presented to a field supervisor who has excelled in the following areas for underground projects: forward thinking and communication to clear the way for work progress, creative problem solving in the field, assigning team members in accordance with their strengths for an efficient work operation, mentoring future leaders, ethic to provide high quality work, cognizance of the project schedule and budget, and a record of fostering a strong safety culture.

2026 recipient: John Kiernan, General Superintendent, Skanska Civil Northeast

Outstanding Educator Award

The UCA Outstanding Educator Award is presented to professors and teachers who have had an exceptional career in academia and the education of underground design and construction.

2026 recipient: Tom Iseley, Professor of Engineering Practice, Purdue University

Person of the Year Award

The UCA Person of the Year Award recognizes those individuals who have made significant contributions to the field of tunneling and underground construction and to UCA during the last two to five years as well as sustained involvement in UCA activities.

2026 recipient: Moussa Wone, Chief Engineer & Vice President, DC Water

Project of the Year Award

The UCA Project of the Year Award is presented to an individual or a group that has shown insight and understanding of underground construction in a significant project, which may include practices, developing concepts, theories, or technologies to overcome unusual problems within a project, resulting in little to no outstanding issues. The award has three categories: Projects Below \$50M, Projects Between \$50M to \$500M, and Projects Greater than \$500M.

2026 recipients: Merco Inc., Legislative Plaza Renovations Project; Fermi Forward Discovery Group (FFDG), Long-Baseline Neutrino Facility Project

Technical Innovation of the Year Award

Nominations for this category of UCA Awards are innovations that have been implemented in tunneling or underground space use projects one year prior to the closing of nominations. Examples include an application, process, or technology that significantly advanced the capabilities of the underground construction industry to deliver safe, efficient, and sustainable underground solutions.

2026 recipient: Arup, Loupe360 and Automated Tunnel Inspection Innovation

Young Member Award

The UCA Young Member Award is presented to a member who is age 35 or under and has excelled in one or more of the following areas: technical accomplishment; development of innovative ideas, initiatives and approaches; challenging and improving industry practices; and

leadership in major technically complex operations through contributions to the tunneling and underground construction profession and/or UCA.

2026 recipient: Jack Lawrence, Tunnel Engineer, HNTB

To view full guidelines for each award and to nominate, visit smenet.org/UCA/Professional-Development/Awards-Competitions/UCA-Awards.

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.*