**WEDA DOY Acceptance Remarks by Matts Binsfeld**

**June 6, 2019,**

Good evening and thank you, what an honor it is to be here with you all on June 6th, such an important day in the history of our country.

I want to thank and acknowledge the awesome people I get an opportunity to work with each and every day at Brennan. They are the real reason I get to stand up here tonight and I am glad that a few of these great people could be here with me Andrew Timmis, Greg Smith and Angela Callaway. There is an old adage in business, “hire people who are smarter and more talented than you- - - and then get the hell out of their way”! I want you guys to know what a privilege I consider it is to work with each of you and to call you and the entire team at Brennan both colleagues and friends.

I want to thank and acknowledge the industry partners we have in the room tonight. Companies such as Infrastructure Alternatives, Boskalis Environmental, Tetra Tech, Rambol, Foth, and Anchor. This is a business, and industry, where risk is inherent and is a force with which we do battle each day. I am glad that we have the good fortune to have close industry partners with whom we can collaborate to find better ways to execute and strategize in the trenches together when our backsides are up against it.

We also have a great group of contractors in the room, I want to acknowledge your presence here tonight and thank you each of you for what you have brought to this industry. In particular, I know we have our friends from Sevenson here. Every morning for the last 20 years, our team at Brennan has risen from bed on a dead sprint in order to keep pace with you folks. Good competition is what propels this industry forward and your good competition has driven us to be a better company.

Finally, I would like to give a sincere and heartfelt thank you to the many mentors who have helped me in my career, it is a debt of gratitude that I can only repay, by paying it forward. Men like Dan Weeks, Russell Inserra, Kevin Zenke and in particular, Vic Buhr who is the 2007 winner of this award.

Of course, as many of you know, Brennan is a family business, so I have had the great honor to call my own father my greatest mentor. He was up on this stage a few years ago, accepting an award for his five decades in this industry and as of the first of this year, he took a step back, switching titles so as to allow the next generation to take hold. This work has a way of getting into your blood, I think my good friend Greg Smith calls it “having mud in your blood”. My father certainly has “mud in his blood”, so it should not have been a surprise when I got to work at 7 a.m. on January 2nd, the day after his retirement, that he was there, pot of coffee on, dialed in and looking at the next opportunity.

I am fortunate that as a boy he took the time to take my brothers and I to many of the Brennan jobsites, and then later in high school he had us out steam cleaning bilges, cutting line for a survey party, or decking on a tow. As kids we walked miles of pipeline in the hot Missouri or Southern Illinois Summers and similarly froze our rear ends off over Christmas breaks working with the guys on equipment.

Those experiences taught us a lot about the purpose of this industry. It gave us the opportunity to meet the farmer, who because of the levees we repaired after the biblical Flood of 1993, now had the courage to clear the fields, replow and replant after losing everything.

It taught us that this industry works for the men and women not in this room tonight, those that about an hour ago across this country went through shift change. Because of the good work this industry provides they have the opportunity to earn good and fair wages commensurate with their high levels of talent.

And later we learned that this industry works for the the community along the Great Lakes, forgotten towns in the proverbial “rustbelt”, where our good work cleans a river or harbor, creating the foundation on which reinvestment and the rebirth of a town or city may occur.

This is an industry with great purpose, this is an industry where innovation is alive and well and this is an industry where talented people like all of you here tonight in this room will drive it forward. So thank you all for being here this week, exchanging your ideas and making WEDA a HUB of innovation and purpose. We have many great things to do together, so let’s get started!