

Civil engineering grad's fascination with highways led to ASU

Robert Serrano will serve as a roadway engineer at Kimley-Horn

By Lisa Irish, ASU News
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Editor's note: This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [spring 2026 graduates](#).

When Robert Serrano watched the scene in “Cars” where characters talk about Interstate 40 bypassing Route 66 and the town around it, it resonated with him as a child growing up near old Route 66.

“I later became fascinated with roads and highways, their different alignments and how they changed over the years,” Serrano says. “I started my own YouTube channel to document this history, before eventually coming back to school to earn my degree.”

That return to school was not something Serrano once thought would be possible. After being pulled out of school after fifth grade, he later earned his GED and attended Central Arizona College before transferring to Arizona State University.

During a tour of the Tempe campus, Serrano says something clicked.

“Some of my friends think I’m crazy for saying this, but after getting onto campus there was something that told me I was home,” he says.

Serrano graduated with a BSE in civil engineering from the [School of Sustainable Engineering and the Built Environment](#), part of the [Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering](#) at ASU, where he turned a lifelong interest in roads, transportation and infrastructure into hands-on experience.

**Outstanding Graduate,
Spring 2026**

BSE in civil engineering

Through research at the [Aspire Research Center](#) at [Utah State University](#), Serrano worked on tuning power transfer modules for roadway systems designed to wirelessly charge electric vehicles. He also explored the feasibility of a mobile, off-grid fast charger for electric vehicles in areas with limited electrical infrastructure, resulting in a published paper with Serrano as lead author.

At ASU, Serrano also helped revive a different kind of vehicle project: the [Solar Devils](#)' effort to build ASU's first solar car in more than 30 years. He served in several leadership roles, including head of electrical engineering and battery team lead, helping oversee the design of the car's high-voltage system, custom solar array and battery.

Serrano says he's especially proud of helping ASU win first place in the [American Society of Civil Engineers](#), or ASCE, Transportation Competition in 2025, where the [ASCE at ASU](#) team created a winning design to fix Tucson's roads. This year, the team won first place again and received the Spirit Bell.

He's also grateful for the scholarships he received including those from the Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer, Chicanos Por La Causa, All-Arizona Academic Team, Tom & JoAnn Prescott Scholarship, Garcia Family Foundation and the Pinal 40.

"If you worry that you're not smart enough for engineering, let me promise you: None of us are," Serrano says. "Most importantly: Find your people."

After graduation, Serrano will be a roadway engineer at [Kimley-Horn](#) in Scottsdale.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Rancho Cucamonga, California,
and Maricopa, Arizona

GED, Central Arizona College

Favorites

Hobby: Filming road trips

Performer: Illenium

Sports team: ASU football

Activity: Game night with friends

Game: Cards Against Humanity

Text image(s)



When characters in “Cars” talked about how Interstate 40 bypassed Route 66 and the town, it resonated with Robert Serrano, who grew up near old Route 66.