

# Los Angeles Section

Monthly: Est. 1913

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John C. Hogan, P.E.  
Los Angeles Section President



### ASCE's Value Proposition

Good news about ASCE membership numbers: after several years of declining membership, the ranks of the Los Angeles Section are increasing in 2011–12. However, closer inspection of the numbers shows that the increase is largely due to more student members. While this bodes well for the future, the fact is, student membership in ASCE is free. A better test of the current health of the organization is to look at the number of dues-paying members. That number is static at best, remaining well down from a few years ago.

An important LA Section goal this year is to grow our dues-paying membership. I am appealing to all members to help achieve this goal. My message this month will hopefully encourage you to take action.

ASCE currently has approximately 141,000 members, including some 30,000 students. We could potentially be much larger. According to the May 2010 figures from the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are 250,000 Civil Engineers in the US. With retirees and students added in, the number of potential ASCE members swells to roughly 300,000.

It is hard for me to understand why a Civil Engineer would not be an ASCE member. ASCE is the premiere professional organization representing the interests of Civil Engineers. In many respects ASCE is to Civil Engineers what the AMA is to physicians, the AIA is to architects, and the American Bar Association is to lawyers. No other organization in the world does what ASCE does for Civil Engineers.

It is not uncommon for ASCE members to question the value of their ASCE membership. This typically occurs about the time the annual dues invoice arrives. The member will reflect on what ASCE is doing for them and whether it is worth the cost of the dues to continue membership. Fortunately, the vast majority of members conclude that membership in ASCE has value and they renew.

Unfortunately, each year too many do not renew. The tragedy is compounded by the large number of practicing Civil Engineers who never have become ASCE members. A variety of reasons are cited by those who decide not to join, including: membership is too expensive and times are tough; my employer doesn't pay for membership; I seldom go to the meetings; I don't read the newsletter or other ASCE publications; or, I decided to devote my dues budget to another organization. Whatever the reason, a decision was made that membership is not worth the cost of dues.

While these are understandable objections, those who raise them cannot possibly be considering all of the benefits of membership. The direct benefits of membership are articulated in ASCE's Member Resource Guide. These include leadership development, educational opportunities, professional growth, networking, career advancement, community involvement, recognition, and personal benefits including financial savings on insurance, technology, and travel.

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# Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

Last month I spent a few days during Engineers' Week with the staff and students of Westchester Enriched Sciences Magnet (WESM) to do two things: promote the engineering profession and become Principal for the Day to understand their challenges specifically in the Environmental Science and Engineering magnets of their school.

If you are not familiar with Westchester Enriched Sciences Magnet, the school actually closed down last year and reopened immediately afterwards to become a school with three magnets. Still under the Los Angeles Unified School District umbrella, WESM has three magnet tracks: Environmental and Natural Science, Health and Sports Medicine, and Aviation and Aerospace.

During my talk at the school library to promote engineering, I was able to speak with kids who are actually thinking about engineering and provided them with an overview of some of the things that can actually point them to the right path to become engineers. My treat was not the countless questions I received while in the talk, but at the parking lot where a couple of kids who were on break told me the following.

"We were in your talk earlier and you made engineering sound so much fun and fulfilling. After hearing you speak, I am now convinced that I should make engineering a career. You made a difference in my life today."

A few days later, when I came back as Principal for the Day, I was mesmerized with the enthusiasm of the kids who were busy building a green structure, and their teacher was telling me of how his friends had given him some solar panels that they can tinker with, and some of his dreams to re-build an old building that has been left unattended in the schoolyard for decades. I also heard about the challenges of motivating kids to like science and math, and the partnerships that they have established with local organizations and businesses to assist kids appreciate the value of what they are learning. Experiential learning is what they call this.

I am saying this because our Section President John Hogan, P.E. has provided a robust framework on why we should be dues-paying ASCE members and the value of our organization in making this world better. We also have an article on the forthcoming report card and the value of such report card in ensuring awareness to the infrastructural ills of our country. Finally, we read through some of the proposed legislation in Sacramento that is of interest to us all and the value of such statutes in enhancing what we can do as civil engineers.

How do all of these relate to one another? Looking at the kids at WESM and getting their feedback as well as hearing their challenges make me think of what ASCE is all about. ASCE is not only about me, or the organization, but of the people outside of the organization it serves. And if I can personally contribute to that in my own little way, then it will be a win-win for all. I hope you see that as well. We are challenged to do so.

Enjoy this issue of your newsletter! Thanks.

—Dr. Cris B. Liban, P.E.

# Disaster Training

Classes are being organized for volunteers to help in the event of a major disaster under the auspicious of the State of California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA). Classes will be held in ASCE Branch areas when there are sufficient requests. Qualified individuals are California Registered Civil, Structural, Geotechnical, Certified engineering Geologists, or Architects. If you are interested in attending a class, or are interested in arranging a class, please contact the ASCE Disaster Preparedness Committee Chairman.

There is no charge for the class.

The class lasts 4 or 5 hours

The class can commence as early as 8 AM or after work.

Monday through Friday or on Saturday

Classes will be given for VOLUNTEERS from professional organizations to assess damage, and COORDINATORS from City or County to direct Volunteers for their area. Coordinators may act as Volunteers outside of their area of expertise.

To register for the class submit your name along with your telephone number and e-mail address. You will be contacted when 10 or more request a class. The maximum number in the class should not exceed 20.

If your Branch, or Firm would like to offer the use of its facilities for a class, please register and provide the name of contact person, phone, and E-mail. You will be contacted to make arrangements.

Thank you for your support.

Jack W. Rolston, Chair

818-903-5225 cell • 818-345-9199 ph • 818-345-5283 fx  
 ascedisaster@earthlink.net

# A Great Idea from the Life Members

The ASCE Life Members' Public Image Committee request that members take their (to be discarded) Civil Engineering magazines to their doctor's office or barber shop and merge them with the stack of magazines. We feel that this will be an effective way to make the general public more aware of what civil engineers do.

## Reminder:

*Copy deadline for the April 2012 issue is March 1, 2012; copy deadline for the May 2012 issue is April 1, 2012.*

For most members, these benefits are reason enough to be an ASCE member. Yet, there is a bigger picture view of what ASCE does for its members. This, to me, is wherein the real ASCE value proposition lies.

To better understand the big picture value of membership, let's examine ASCE's Vision, Mission, and Goals.

**ASCE's Vision:** Civil engineers are global leaders building a better quality of life.

**ASCE's Mission:** Provide essential value to our members and partners, advance civil engineering, and serve the public good.

**ASCE's Goals** spell out how the mission is carried out:

- Facilitate the advancement of technology to enhance quality, knowledge, competitiveness, sustainability, and environmental stewardship.
- Encourage and provide the tools for lifelong learning to aid our members' continued growth throughout their careers.
- Promote professionalism and the profession throughout society to enhance the stature of civil engineers and to influence public policy.
- Develop and support civil engineer leaders to broaden our members' perspectives, enhance their career growth, and promote the public interest.
- Advocate infrastructure and environmental stewardship to protect the public health and safety and improve the quality of life.

Each of these goals has fostered a wide array of action items that are being pursued by ASCE throughout the nation. Here in California, the Sacramento Legislative Fly-in, Infrastructure Symposium, and Report Card unveiling—all of which took place in late February—are examples of how ASCE is enhancing the stature of CE's, influencing public policy, and advocating infrastructure.

Considering our vision, mission, and goals, is ASCE membership really unaffordable to any employed Civil Engineer? The cost of dues works out to less than \$1 dollar per day. This goes to support an organization which is devoted to causes that directly benefit you, your career, and the lives of your loved ones. Those who take their membership to a more active level and attend meetings, subscribe to publications, join committees, etc., derive a greater benefit from membership. However, one can do absolutely nothing in ASCE except pay dues and still receive value!

With over 140,000 members, ASCE is no small organization. Numbers like this carry clout and enhance the effectiveness of the organization in advancing its goals, especially with regard to influencing public policy. So, too, does the credibility that we have as Civil Engineers. Studies have shown that ours is among the most trusted of professions. The general public views Civil Engineers as having high intelligence and great integrity. When a whole bunch of Civil Engineers suggest that something needs fixing, there's a good chance action will be taken.

We are influential now, but imagine if we grew to 200,000 members. Or what if we got all quarter million Civil Engineers in the US to join and our numbers approached 300,000 with the students and retirees? We would double our clout! With a force of that size, it would be hard to find a public policy maker or legislator in the country, at any level, who would not listen to what we have to say. This might just be enough to convince our leaders to adjust priorities and step up the investment in infrastructure. Imagine how the fortunes of all civil engineers would benefit from a greater national investment in infrastructure.

When Civil Engineers are in demand and busy planning, designing and building infrastructure, good things start to happen for us. More hiring takes place, positions become more secure, salaries rise, promotions take place, and work is more fun and intellectually stimulating. Moreover, our completed projects provide an improvement in quality of life within our communities. The world, indeed, becomes a better place.

All this, and more, is possible, with a vibrant and growing ASCE membership base.

Please enable ASCE to increase the value it brings you by taking a few simple steps to grow the ASCE ranks. Here is what you can do:

1. If not already done so, renew your own membership - now! (Or, if not a member, join - now!). Go to [www.asce.org](http://www.asce.org) to do so.
2. Actively encourage your colleagues and coworkers to join. Have them go to [www.asce.org](http://www.asce.org) to do so.
3. Identify candidates for membership and email their contact information to ASCE (use the "Contact Us" tab at [www.asce.org](http://www.asce.org)). ASCE, in turn, will reach out to the prospective member.

Thank you in advance for helping to achieve the important goal of membership growth.

As always, feel free to contact me with your suggestions, comments, and advice. I look forward to hearing from you.

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**ASCE's 2012  
Member-Get-A-Member  
Drive Depends on You!**



[www.ascelasection.org](http://www.ascelasection.org)

# Mobilizing for the Year of Infrastructure

*Yazdan Emrani, P.E.*

*Co-Chair, Region 9 Statewide Infrastructure Report Card Committee*

*Senior Vice President/Principal*

*Hall & Foreman, Inc.*

*yemrani@hfinc.com*

Not too long ago when you mentioned the word infrastructure in a conversation with a non-engineer, you either got a blank stare or like the Spelling Bee, the listener asked you to spell it and use it in a sentence! Well, the good news is that "Infrastructure" has seeped into our national lexicon and you even hear leading politicians talk about needed infrastructure investments. The bad news is there is still not enough funding to even maintain what we have got, let alone invest in new infrastructure. The current recession has obviously made matters worse.

Historically, recessions tend to trigger a drop in tax revenue and an increased demand for government services, which stresses government budgets. The current recession is no different, but this time, declines in municipal tax revenues have been more severe. This is due to a prolonged period of high unemployment, and a sluggish economic recovery. Another factor that is contributing to the current sharp decline in tax revenue is the shrinking of the property tax base because of the high rate of property foreclosures and continually falling home prices. Stable home prices provide stable tax revenue, which is used to fund many critical city and county services, such as the local police force, fire department, public education, and infrastructure projects. The fall in property values that began in the recent recession, and that continues in many markets across California today are amplifying the budget crises across California.

Well, that was cheerful information! Should we fold up our tents and wait for the economy to get better and hope for more infrastructure funding at that time? Or should we mobilize behind a unified message and become individual "Infrastructure Champions" advocating for a cause that directly impacts our career, our county's well being, as well as California's economic health? I would argue for the latter and we have the tools to do it.

ASCE Region 9 (California) has decided to do an update of the 2006 California Infrastructure Report Card (CAIRC). I was asked by ASCE California's Board of Governors to resume my role as the Co-Chair for this effort. Our task is to do an update of the categories examined in 2006 and release the grades as part of ASCE's Legislative Day visit in Sacramento on February 29, 2012. To that end we have assembled a great group of volunteers from all across California who have been working tirelessly on this project since October of last year. By the time you read this article, we will have finalized the results and gone to print so that the CAIRC will be ready for distribution by the end of February.

It will be interesting to see whether or not the grades have changed from almost six years ago and what is the new investment estimate for bringing California's infrastructure up to par. In September of 2006, when the first CAIRC was released, we estimated a need for a 10-year investment totaling \$370B to improve the grades for the then infrastructure categories. In November of that year voters in California approved infrastructure bonds worth \$42B. Although not quite enough, it was a great start and it did show the important role the report card plays as a tool for ASCE in shaping public opinion through infrastructure investment advocacy. So, I ask you to get involved and join this campaign and become an "Infrastructure Champion" in your own right. Get a copy of the 2012 CAIRC and talk to your friends, neighbors, and state, and national legislators about the importance of infrastructure investment and the fact that now is exactly the time to increase, not cut, spending on our infrastructure. We have a long road ahead of us to recovery, but as Lao-Tzu said over 3000 years ago, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

For information on the 2006 and 2012 California Infrastructure Report Cards, please visit [www.ascecareportcard.org](http://www.ascecareportcard.org).

# Congratulations, LA Section Volunteers

Congratulations to the four Los Angeles Section members who received special recognition from ASCE's Thank a Volunteer Program. This program commends those ASCE members whose volunteer work has created meaningful change in the community. The announcement was made in January at the ASCE Multi-Regional Leadership Conference in Portland, Oregon. Each of these members will receive a personal letter of appreciation from Society President Andrew Hermann, P.E.

The members receiving "Thank a Volunteer" recognition are:

**Heren Molina** – Metropolitan Los Angeles Branch

**Jeannette Lindeman** – Orange County Branch

**Gary Gilbert** – Orange County Branch

**Carolyn Berg** – San Luis Obispo Branch



"Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Los Angeles Section"  
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**Bob Bein, P.E.**

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Pres. 2004-2005

**Rich Haller, P.E.**

Pres. 2005-2006

**John Morris, P.E.**

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Pres. 2007-2008

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Pres. 2012-2013

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Life Members

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Dear L.A. Section Member,

It is hard to believe that the Los Angeles Section will be 100 years old in 2013. This is a monumental event that we have been looking forward to for several years. It is an honor to be the Chair of the Centennial Committee and working closely with Honorary Chair Bob Bein. Bob is a tremendous partner to work with and, as a former ASCE national President and the Chair of the successful National ASCE Annual Conference hosted by the Los Angeles Section, to achieve the goals for the celebration.

Our plans for this year long celebration are spectacular. Over our Centennial year we will be conducting activities to celebrate the contributions that civil engineers have made to the development of southern California and will continue to make in the future. Some of the planned events are a Centennial video highlighting significant projects and L.A. Section civil engineers, an Infrastructure Symposium, Centennial Celebration Dinner, K-12 Outreach, Engineers Week, History and Heritage programs, Younger Member Forum events, and student events.

In order to make this happen, we want you to be part of the team. As with any great organization, the Los Angeles Section relies on its team members to accomplish goals. Each of you as a member of the Section is invited to join us in making our Centennial celebration a tremendous success. I am reaching out for volunteers that can work on the various committees.

As a member of the Section you are invited to join us in making our Centennial celebration a tremendous success by helping us accomplish our fundraising goal of \$95,000. A donation of \$10 per month for the next two years or one-time payment of \$240 in a one-time payment is suggested. Of course, you if you are able to make a larger donation, then that would be greatly appreciated. For your convenience we are providing the attached form. In addition, we are making it even more convenient by providing a means to make an electronic payment through your PayPal account or with a credit card by going to [www.ascelasection.org/index.php/memberdonate100th](http://www.ascelasection.org/index.php/memberdonate100th).

Please feel free to call me at 213-922-7491 or email me at [sepulvedad@metro.net](mailto:sepulvedad@metro.net) if you have any suggestions or questions. Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Don Sepulveda, P.E.

Chair



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Centennial Celebration**

**INDIVIDUAL - Donation/Pledge Form**

(NOTE: This form is for INDIVIDUAL donations only. A corporate sponsorship page will be available soon)

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**THANK YOU!**

**Make Checks payable to:** ASCE Los Angeles Section  
(Note: in the memo section write "Centennial Celebration Individual Donation")

**Mail to:** ASCE Los Angeles Section, c/o Gayle Stewart, 1405 Warner Ave. Suite B, Tustin CA 92780

*"ASCE Los Angeles Section" is a tax-exempt corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS. Our Tax ID # is 95-2594246.*

# Legislative Update

By Richard Markuson

## Title Act Conversion Bill Defeated

Senate Bill 692 would convert the nine title acts into practice acts and would authorize any licensed engineer to practice engineering work in any field in which he or she is competent and proficient. The bill was defeated in the Senate Business Professions Committee on a vote of 2-0. The sponsors were energized by an opinion from the Legislative Counsel that only civil engineers could practice civil engineering. AIChE is reportedly considering the reintroduction of the bill in 2012.

## Changing your address? Don't forget to tell your Board.

The rules of the Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors and Geologists (BPELSG) require that any certificate or license holder notify the Board of a change of address within 30 days of such change. BPELSG has created an on-line change of address form so that this does not have to be done by a paper submittal any more. It is important (and in some cases critical) that the Board have current addresses. Please be sure to tell your Board (and your Mom) when you move. [https://www.dca.ca.gov/webapps/pels/address\\_change.php](https://www.dca.ca.gov/webapps/pels/address_change.php)

## Recent Reports

The Bureau of State Audits has released its report, "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009: Energy Follow-Up Update," which finds as of December 20, 2011 the Energy Commission had spent a total of \$117.5 million (52%) of the \$226 million that was awarded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act), and says the Energy Commission must spend the remaining \$108.6 million by April 30, 2012.

CA Senate Office of Research has released its report, "Federal Transportation Funding: How Does It Work and What Will the New Transportation Act Mean for California," which says Federal funds allotted to states for transportation projects are up for renewal by Congress in the coming months, and outlines "what California stands to gain or lose is significant."

The Bureau of State Audits has released its report, "High-Speed Rail Authority Follow-Up: Although the Authority Addressed Some of Our Prior Concerns, Its Funding Situation Has Become Increasingly Risky and the Authority's Weak Oversight Persists," which finds the Authority "has not provided viable funding alternatives in the event that its planned funding does not materialize," and says in its 2012 draft business plan, the Authority "more than doubled" its previous cost estimates for phase one to between \$98.1 billion and \$117.6 billion and has only secured "approximately \$12.5 billion to date."

The CA Senate Office of Research has released its report, "Sales Tax Add-Ons: A New Trend in Local Government Finance," which highlights the state now has "132 special taxing jurisdictions" which generate "more than \$3.7 billion in local government revenue."

The Legislative Analyst's Office has released its report, "The 2012-13 Budget: Overview of the Governor's Budget," which calls the Governor's tax initiative the cornerstone of this budget plan, and says revenue estimates for high income Californians are "an even bigger question mark than usual."

Public Policy Institute of California releases report, Transitions for the Delta Economy, which finds restoration, storage and conveyance initiatives would hurt economic activity in the Delta's primary zone more than in the "fast-growing secondary zone", recommends investing in levees to protect "most valuable land," encouraging growth in Delta recreational opportunities, further research on the effect of a "dual conveyance system" on water salinity, and developing "mitigation strategies" for landowners.

Staff members of the CA High-Speed Rail Authority have released its "I-5 Conceptual Study"; says Antelope Valley corridor "still has fewer potential environmental impacts and greater connectivity" than the I-5 corridor.

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