

Los Angeles Section

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ORANGE / SAN_BERNARDINO/RIVERSIDE / SAN_LUIS_OBISPO / SANTA_BARBARA/VENTURA / DESERT / SOUTHERN SAN_JOAQUIN / METROPOLITAN LOS ANGELES

“Never be afraid to try something new. Remember, amateurs built the ark, professionals built the Titanic.” — Anonymous

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

By Neil D. Morrison, P.E.
President, Los Angeles Section, ASCE

WHY DO HOUSES COST SO MUCH?

As many of you know, I have spent more than twenty years serving the land development/home building industry as a consulting civil engineer. I have been fortunate to have spent most of that time working in and learning from such great master-planned communities as Newport Coast, Tustin Ranch, Marblehead Inland, San Juan Hills, Belcourt, and the residential housing component for California State University, Channel Islands. I have also worked on in-tract developments such as Seascape, Sausalito, Trovare, Altezza, and Sevita. So I am very interested in the subject of what drives residential housing prices.

We all learned at some point that what drives markets is “supply and demand”. This is true, of course, for the housing market. But “location, location, location” also drives real estate markets.

Population

Here are some statistics from the 2000 U.S. Census, by county in California: the actual 2000 population figures, the projected 2003 population figures, and the calculated percentage change from 2000 to 2003:

	2000	2003	%Change
Los Angeles County	9,519,338	9,871,506	+3.7%
Orange County	2,846,289	2,957,766	+3.9%
Riverside County	1,545,387	1,782,650	+16.0%
San Bernardino County	1,709,434	1,859,678	+8.8%
Ventura County	753,197	791,130	+5.0%
Santa Barbara County	399,347	403,134	+0.9%
San Luis Obispo County	246,681	253,118	+2.6%
Kern County	661,645	713,087	+7.8%
Mono/Inyo Counties	30,798	31,314	+1.1%

Approved Units and Permits Issued

Following are statistics for new residential building units approved and permits issued for these same counties in 2000, versus those in 2004:

	2000	2004	% Change
Los Angeles County	10,487	10,347	-1.4%
Orange County	9,137	3,900	-57.3%
Riverside County	8,732	14,086	+61.1%
San Bernardino County	3,686	7,511	+103.4%
Ventura County	2,236	1,130	-49.5%
Santa Barbara County	N. R.	723	
San Luis Obispo County	975	893	-8.4%
Kern County	N. R.	N. R.	
Mono/Inyo Counties	55	58	+5.5%

Early in August, a headline on the front page of the *Los Angeles Times* Business section read, “Builders Keep Putting Up Housing – but Not Enough”. The gist of the article was that even though the number of permits for new residential housing units in such counties as Riverside and San Bernardino is rising sharply, housing needs Statewide are so great that the Building Industry of

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Reminder: Copy deadline for the November 2004 newsletter is October 1, 2004; copy deadline for the December 2004 issue is November 1, 2004.



A New Phase

We enter a new period of ASCE leadership this month. Brand new and returning officers are taking the helm and now are beginning to assist in the functions of our organization. This is nothing new to ASCE, in the Los Angeles Section in particular. Every year we create hope through this new batch of leaders that the gains of the previous leadership are exploited for the advancement of our engineering profession.

Also this month is the second time this year that the California Professional Engineer's exam is being offered: the rite of passage for most of us "engineers". Some will take this the first time, some the umpteenth time. If you are a first timer, do not feel bad if you do not pass all of the sections, especially that dreaded Seismic Special Exam. A lot of people do not. On the other hand, if you have been here several times in the past, you know the drill. Take the exam, be anxious for 13 weeks, open the Board letter, jump up and down if you passed or if you did not, look up the next exam date and do it again. Wherever you are in your P.E. exam phase, good luck!

This issue contains the first message of our new Section President Neil Morrison, P.E. His message on the shortage of housing is very timely given the fact that the number of people who can afford decent housing has recently been announced to have decreased (specifically here in California). We also feature the eighth article in a series of articles by Tony Antich and Joyce Klenner.

Another article of interest is the call for mentors for the 2005 Future City Competition. This competition is an excellent opportunity for career engineers to showcase the beauty of working on functional designs that evolve into interactive cities. Finally, we are also informed of the formation of the Los Angeles Section Environment and Water Resources Technical Group. The formation of this group stemmed out of the success of two Water Symposiums sponsored by the Los Angeles Metropolitan Branch in 2003. We hope you join in these very worthwhile endeavours.

Finally, the national elections are fast approaching. While we do not want to endorse any candidate, we would like to simply state that you should vote your heart out for the candidate(s) who will do best for our profession. For ours and our children's good, go out and vote. Enjoy this issue.

- Cris B. Liban, D.Env.

PRE-CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

By

*Tony Antich, City Engineer
City of Santa Monica, California*

And

Joyce Klenner, J.A.K. Networks Unlimited

This is the eighth in a series of articles dealing with keys to successful public works project management. Meetings, called Pre-Job Conferences, are held before the start of construction. If the Project Manager intends to have a Pre-Job Conference, it should be scheduled at least one (1) week prior to the scheduled Pre-Construction Meeting. Most jobs require that a conference be held by the Project Manager to work out specific issues and to do advance planning, with input from the Client Department and the utility companies, prior to the Pre-Construction Meeting. Smaller jobs or less complicated jobs may not require a Pre-Job Conference.

The Project Manager should be sure to give both the Client Department and utility companies sufficient lead time to prepare for the Pre-Job Conference. The Project Manager should invite those who have a voice in the successful outcome of the project (e.g., the Project Director, the Project Designer, the Building and Safety Inspector, and the Public Works Inspector).

Prior to the Pre-Job Conference, the agenda should be shared and reviewed with those planning to be in attendance. During the Pre-Job Conference, each party's position on each applicable item should be discussed. The Project Manager should allow enough time to reach a decision as to how to handle or resolve each issue. At the conclusion of the Pre-Job Conference, the Project Manager will determine which of the people in attendance are required to be at the Pre-Construction Meeting — and what each person's role will be in the delivery of the project.

PRE-CONSTRUCTION MEETING

A Pre-Construction Meeting should be held prior to the beginning of actual project construction. The Project Manager may want to invite representatives from the following:

- Client Department.
- Project Designer.
- Public Works Inspector.
- Building and Safety Inspector.
- Contractor and the Superintendent.
- Subcontractors and their Superintendents.
- Key suppliers.
- Utility companies.
- Public agency representatives, as necessary.

The primary purpose of the Pre-Construction Meeting is to establish ground rules for all parties concerned and to ensure that the Contractor and Subcontractors understand the complex job requirements. It also provides an opportunity for the Contractor to

raise questions and to clear up any misunderstandings. In this way, work can progress smoothly and efficiently and in accordance with the Contract Documents. It is essential that an accurate record be kept of all matters discussed at the Pre-Construction Meeting and a copy of the record sent to all parties attending the meeting. The Contractor's legally authorized representative and the Project Manager should sign the minutes of the Pre-Construction Meeting.

The Project Manager will set a date for the Pre-Construction Meeting, coordinating this date with the Client Department. As a minimum, the Project Manager should:

- Review each item of the Pre-Construction Meeting Agenda.
- Write down the specifics for each item to be covered, if it is applicable to the project.
- Include the particular issues or decisions/resolutions reached in the Pre-Job Conference.
- Give the Client Department the opportunity to review it and provide input on its contents before finalizing the agenda.
- Allow enough time to cover each applicable item in detail.

- Record the discussion and resolution/conclusion for each item (or arrange for someone else to perform this function).
- After the Pre-Construction Meeting, review the record of matters discussed with the Client Department.
- Have copies made and sent to each party who attended the Pre-Construction Meeting.
- Place the original set of minutes in the project file.

For Federally funded projects (e.g., CDBG projects), the Pre-Construction Meeting should be conducted following the requirements as outlined by the Federal government.

SUBMITTALS

Submittals are items submitted by the Contractor to the owner or owner's representative (Architects, Engineers, or other consultants) for review and approval, based on compliance with the Contract Documents. The submittal process must be clearly outlined in the Contract Documents. Submittals include, but are not limited to, schedules, shop drawings, manufacturers' product data, samples, mock-ups, test results, warranties, maintenance agreements, project photographs, record drawings, field measurement data, and operating and maintenance manuals. Materials lists, along with descriptive literature and any other material requiring review, shall be submitted within the time frame specified in the Contract Documents in accordance with the construction schedule.

The Project Manager should check the Contract Documents to determine what submittals are required and when they are due. To ensure easy tracking of submittals, each submittal required for the project should be itemized on a List of Submittals form. If a due date has been specified, that should be indicated. If no due date is specified, the Project Manager will request a submittal schedule from the Contractor which considers the review timeline indicated in Contract Documents, and which does not cause any delay in the work activities.

As submittals are received, the following should be indicated on the List of Submittals:

- The dates received.
- The dates sent out for review.
- The dates returned.
- The dates forwarded to the Contractor.
- An indication whether the submittals are approved with no exceptions noted or are rejected.

All submittals requiring review and approval must be submitted and reviewed in a timely manner so as to cause no delay in the work and to be in accordance with the time frame specified in the Contract Documents. The Project Manager is responsible for ensuring that approval or denial of the submittals is completed within the time specified in the Contract Documents, unless extenuating circumstances exist.

When receiving the submittals, the Project Manager should verify that the Contractor has reviewed and approved each one. If a Subcontractor was involved with a submittal, it should also have the Subcontractor's dated signature. Unless your Contract Documents permit, no submittal should be accepted directly from a Subcontractor.

The Project Manager should forward all but one copy of the submittal to the Project Designer to determine whether or not the submittal conforms to the design concept and/or the Contract Documents. The Client Department should be involved in reviewing any submittals that deal with colors, materials, products, furnishings, etc. This includes any submittal that directly affects their working environment and potentially affects the ongoing operational and maintenance budget.

When responding to submittals, it is important to be as clear as possible, using statements such as the following:

- "No Exceptions Noted."
- "Resubmit with Corrections."
- "Rejected" (with reasons).

A reference should be included to the Contract Documents, Drawing number, Sheet number, or Detail number. When the review is completed, the Project Manager shall retain one copy. If a submittal must be rechecked, the same process above should be

followed. The recheck is to be completed within the specified contract time, unless the resubmission is extensive or of documents omitted from the initial submission.

PERMITS AND LICENSES

Licenses required by Contractors and Subcontractors must be secured prior to the start of the project. Each applicable permit must be secured prior to beginning work in the area covered by the permit. All permits and licenses must be current. Generally, the city waives permit fees for the Contractor on Public Works Projects. If fees are to be paid, fees should be listed in the Bid Documents.

Contractor Licenses

Each Contractor (and each Subcontractor) must have a valid contractor's license (in California, check with the State Contractor License Board by calling 800-321-2752 or go to www.CSLB.CA.gov).

City Business Licenses

The Contractor, as well as each Subcontractor, must have a valid City business license.

City Permits

The Project Manager is responsible to monitor and ensure the Contractor's progress in obtaining all necessary permits — thereby ensuring that the project is not delayed.

Some or all of the following permits may be required for City projects. The Project Manager should consult specific agencies or City departments to confirm their requirements and whether or not a permit is necessary. Construction projects may require that the Contractor secure a permit such as (typical permits are listed here):

- **Building & Safety Permit** — prior to the start of construction (breaking ground).

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AND THE WINNERS ARE...

By the time you read this article, most of you will have already attended the annual Los Angeles Section Awards and 2004/2005 Board of Directors Installation lunch, held at the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, and you already know the results listed below. "Thanks" to all those who participated in this event. Those who did not attend may read about it here and know that you missed a great time.

2003/2004 LOS ANGELES SECTION AWARDS

Outstanding Life Member

Arthur E. Bruington, P.E.

Excellence in Engineering Journalism

Pat Brennan, *Orange County Register*

Distinguished Engineering Educator

Al Nestlinger, P.E., Cal State Fullerton

Outstanding Engineer of the Year – Government

Ken R. Smith, P.E.

Orange County Public Facilities & Resource Department

Outstanding Engineer of the Year – Private Sector

William Lawson, P.E.

Tettermer & Associates

Young Engineer of the Year

Anh Ly, P.E.,

Parsons Transportation Group

Outstanding Private Sector Civil Engineering Project

Irvine Spectrum 5

Irvine Company, Commercial Property Development

The Keith Companies; Tettermer & Associates;

Goffman, McCormick & Urban, Inc.

Honorable Mention - Private Sector Civil Engineering Project

Harveston Master Planned Community

Lennar Communities; RBF Consulting;

Leighton & Associates; Dudek & Associates

Outstanding Government Civil Engineering Project

Chino Basin Stormwater Recharge & Imported Water Facilities Improvements

Inland Empire Utilities Agency; Tettermer & Associates

Honorable Mention - Government Civil Engineering Project

Spaulding Avenue Porous Asphalt Parking Lot

City of West Hollywood Engineering Department

Congratulations to all of the winners!

Neil D. Morrison, P.E.

President, Los Angeles Section, ASCE

2005 FUTURE CITY COMPETITION - MENTORS NEEDED

Local schools are starting to form teams to the 2005 Future City Competition, and the regional competition leader is seeking mentor volunteers.

Mentors will meet with their assigned school after-hours (convenient to the mentor's home or office), approximately once per week or biweekly over several months, guiding the school team members in the development of their city (using the Sim City computer game), model building, paper writing, and presentation skills.

The mission of the National Engineers Week Future City Competition is to provide a fun and exciting educational engineering program for seventh-and eighth-grade students, that combines a stimulating engineering challenge with a "hands-on" application to present their vision of a city of the future. Now in its second decade, the competition is a program developed to help students discover and foster interests in math, science and engineering. The National website for the competition is www.futurecity.org.

ASCE members have been very involved with the competition over the past ten years, with mentors leading their teams to first, second, and third place regional wins, and an eighth place national win. Various ASCE board members from the Metropolitan Los Angeles Branch and the Los Angeles Section have served as judges at the regional competition, and ASCE sponsored last year's "Aesthetic Design Award" at the event.

Please contact Opoku Acheampong, head of the local competition, for more information at opoku_acheampong@dot.ca.gov, or (909) 383-4684.

PRE-CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

continued from page 3

- **Traffic Permit** — to install temporary fences or barricades.
- **Power Permit** — to install power; to pay for power used.
- **Sewer Permit** — to permit sewer work.
- **Water Usage Permit** — deposit for use of eddy valves; also to pay for all water used.
- **Use of Public Property** — to use street (e.g., close off sidewalk, place dumpster on street, etc.).
- **After Hours Construction Permit** — to request permission to work after regular hours on dates indicated in the Contract Documents. Once the Contractor completes and signs the permit application, it must be submitted for approval.
- **Excavation in Public Right-of-Way** — whenever work is performed to repair, install, or modify a utility such as telephone, gas, electric, etc.
- **Parking Permit** — to park equipment on the street.
- **Specialty Permits** — such as:
 - Electrical Permit.
 - Plumbing Permit.
 - Mechanical Permit.
 - Sandblasting Permit.
 - Demolition Permit.

Other Agency Permits

Some permits required by other agencies may include:

- **Caltrans Permit** — for work in the State Highway.
- **Coastal Commission Permit** — for work within the Coastal Zone.
- **Health Permit** — prior to the operation of a facility (obtained from the County).
- **Regional Water Quality Control Board** — for water discharge into waterways.

Los Angeles Section Kicks off the Environment and Water Resources Technical Group

As a result of the success of two Water Symposiums sponsored by the Metropolitan Branch in 2003, a new local technical group has been formed. The Environment and Water Resources Technical Group has been formally established by the Section Board with the following draft objectives:

- Establish a forum for promoting environmentally sound and sustainable multipurpose infrastructure to be considered among multiple agencies and jurisdictions managing all aspects of water resources within Southern California,
- Actively engage the leadership within the environmental, water resources, and engineering communities within Southern California, and
- Attract members to participate in ASCE.

Additionally, the Group has accepted an invitation to serve as the committee responsible for providing stewardship of the recommendations developed in the 2003 Water Symposiums. Following is a brief overview of those symposiums, some of the initial activities of the Group, and a description of the national ASCE Environment and Water Resources Institute.

The Metropolitan Branch sponsored two Water Symposiums in 2003 (May and September). Approximately 50 leaders, including many of the civil engineering leaders in Southern California met at the University of Southern California and were asked to "identify the top issues facing the civil engineering profession that are key to meeting the near and long term water needs of Southern California." The top three issues identified were:

1. Create incentives/identifying and removing institutional barriers for regional solutions to regional problems,
2. Use effective communication skills with the community, regulators, and legislators, and
3. Assume leadership roles to influence public policy.

In addition to these issues, action plans were developed on how to address each of these' issues.

1. Create Incentives and Remove Barriers
 - Develop funding mechanisms for multipurpose and regional solutions. Agencies need to assume lead agency role. Create Outreach Program
 - Develop training and educational programs
 - Develop a regional plan for water infrastructure needs
2. Develop and Use Effective Communication Skills
 - Develop curriculum (Integrate presentation and writing skills into the undergraduate program).
 - Develop Managerial Public Policy Internship (For all level skills of engineers)
3. Assume Leadership Roles
 - Promote membership participation in the political process.
 - Advocate policy positions from within ASCE
 - Build coalitions with other professional associations
 - Give a workshop for ASCE branches with presentations from civil engineers in public policy

One of the first actions of the newly formed group was to sponsor a workshop on August 19, 2004 to begin to implement the first action: Develop funding mechanisms for multipurpose and regional solutions. Leaders within Los Angeles County attended a workshop

to discuss the opportunities and barriers to working together to address the critical need of funding for future infrastructure to support the objectives of agencies responsible for water supply, wastewater treatment, flood control, and storm water treatment. The goal of this local effort is to develop a model in Los Angeles that may be replicated in other counties and regions throughout Southern California. Participants at the August 19 workshop claimed it to be a success, and a follow-up workshop is scheduled for September 16 to consider a mission statement and goals for this ad hoc committee (Results of that meeting will be reported in the November Newsletter).

Many of the other actions outlined above will need similar stewardship. WE NEED YOUR HELP. While the newly formed technical group is making progress on executing the actions described above, more leadership is needed to carry out all the recommended actions from the 2003 Water Symposiums. Please call or email the newly elected Co-Chairs of the Group if you'd like to help. Once enough "leaders" step forward, the first formal meeting of this Technical Group will take place. That meeting will be announced in the Section's November Newsletter.

Co-Chairs:

Michael Drennan, P.E., 310/309-4331,
mdrennan@brwncald.com

Tim Piasky, P.E. 909/396-9993, 1p1t\SkY@biasc.Org

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *continued*

America estimates that home builders could construct more than 200,000 new residential units per year and still not get caught up with the demand. The article also explained that the main difference between 1989, when the housing market crashed, and now, is that land developers and home builders today have virtually no inventory, while in 1989 they had thousands of empty homes and lots. Today, most builders build in small phases and have pre-qualified buyers before beginning construction. I recently visited several model home sites in Orange and Riverside counties and was amazed that all of the homes in available phases of every development were already sold to pre-qualified buyers, and that there were long waiting lists for the next phases. In some instances—depending on the location, builder, and pricing—there have been campouts and lotteries.

A couple of years ago, The Irvine Company and several home builders held a pre-opening event for the Quail Hill Master Planned Community, and over 4,000 people went through in one weekend. These people did not go through models or even walk the planned streets. There was just a tent for the home builders to take the names of interested parties and begin the pre-qualification process. The project itself was still under construction and the home builders had not yet been allowed on the site to begin construction of the homes. This process is being repeated day after day throughout the State, especially in Southern California. Some home builders are selling their homes out of sales trailers without even having to build models, because the houses sell so fast that there is no need to invest in building any model homes.

Nowadays, there is just not enough **supply** being delivered to meet the **demand**, regardless of the **location**. It is a constant struggle for land developers and home builders as this pent-up demand increases, because land prices, skilled labor costs, and raw materials prices are steadily going up as well. Demand is expanding primarily from internal sources such as our adult children needing homes, our parents needing smaller and different types of homes, or us in the middle trying to upgrade our lifestyles. Added to this internal demand is a considerable influx of people from other countries to Southern California, and these individuals and families impact the demand for homes.

Location is vitally important here in Southern California. Housing market experts talk about a certain market segment demanding a Newport Beach address, or a highly desirable school district, and/or easy access to businesses and shopping. Coastal areas such as Orange County, parts of San Diego County, Santa Barbara, Ventura and parts of Los Angeles County were and are "the place to live", but are much more expensive now due to build-out of these areas, thus driving down the supply. Fortunately, other parts of Southern California are expanding to meet the needs of families. You can see areas of Riverside County, such as the I-15 corridor or the desert areas, or further up this corridor in San Bernardino County and further, to Victorville, and along the 5 and 14 freeways, with areas like Santa Clarita, Palmdale and Lancaster—all just booming! These areas are becoming full-fledged communities with their own identities, with major universities and local and regional business centers.

Civil Engineers Needed!

Civil engineers constitute a vital component of residential housing development, and—based on the current numbers of civil engineering students and graduates in this field—there may not be enough of these professionals to help land developers and home builders meet the overwhelming demand for new housing. So, please, get involved and do your part to help promote civil engineering as an important career to all who will listen, especially students at every level—elementary through high school, and beyond.

Thank you. I look forward to serving as your president of this great ASCE Section throughout this next year.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CGEA REGIONAL DINNER MEETING

Vapor Barriers: Nuisance or Necessity?

The subject of vapor barriers or retarders beneath concrete slabs on grade has long been controversial. Not surprisingly, reaching consensus on this subject has been difficult. There is, however, a single answer to the title question, and it is yes, a vapor barrier can be both a nuisance and a necessity.

Our speaker, Peter Craig, has over 30 years of experience with specialized aspects of concrete construction, maintenance repair and protection. This dinner meeting will be held Wednesday, October 20, 2004, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Santa Ana. Please see our web site for more meeting details and registration information: www.cgea.org <<http://www.cgea.org>>.

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.



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Assistant Engineer (Bridge) Riverside or San Diego - BSCE degree and 1 to 3 years bridge design experience. Caltrans experience is preferred.

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