

tappy Thanksqiving to All!!!

VOL_XLVIII NO_11

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Reminder:

Copy deadline for the Dec. 2008 issue is Nov. 1, 2008; copy deadline for Jan. 2009 issue is Dec. 1, 2008.



Los Angeles Section

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Don Sepulveda, P.E., FASCE Section President



The Politics of Infrastructure

On November 4 we will be selecting new leadership and voting on some important measures that affect not only us as engineers, but the community as a whole. I thought that I would take this message to talk about some of the issues in this next election and what is at stake.

We have all read about ASCE's efforts to inform the public of concerns regarding our infrastructure. We have been preparing report cards on the topic for several years. Unfortunately, it took the Katrina disaster and the collapse of the I-35 bridge in Minnesota to really bring this to the forefront. With few exceptions, the mainstream news has been remarkably silent on the state of the infrastructure. Over the past couple of years, our efforts to inform our elected leaders about the state of our infrastructure have been successful, but the economy has stifled some of the efforts for additional funding to make the necessary improvements or upgrades.

Our presidential election is an important one this year. I am not going to endorse either of the major candidates within this message. That is not what we are about. I will however, address the issue of infrastructure and how the discussion of infrastructure has not been at the forefront of the debates.

During the primaries, we heard the suggestion that the gas tax should be suspended for the summer to give relief to everyday citizens. During that time I had discussions with friends and relatives who agreed with that idea. It was not until I informed them about what the gas tax was used for that they understood the problem. As civil engineers, we know that one of the main sources of revenue for the maintenance and other funding of our highways are the gas taxes. Imagine the condition of these roadways without these much needed funds for several months.

Our infrastructure is a prominent issue in this election. When you look at the candidates, not just the national candidates, but your local candidates, look at what their stance is on infrastructure. Are they interested in this topic? Do they have a plan? Is their plan for the infrastructure part of their overall economic plan? Endorsements aside, we do need to understand that it is not just about adjusting taxes up or down, or about spending. It is about how the entire economic machine is going to work in relation to our decaying infrastructure. We have all heard that the reason we cannot improve or fix things is because we do not have the available funding. It is time to look at the funding question in relation to the jobs question and look to our leaders to connect the dots.

In Los Angeles, we have an important measure to decide upon this election. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has placed a number of items on his platform for his term as Mayor, probably the most prominent of these is his stance on transportation and mobility in Los Angeles. The Mayor has recognized the need for improved public transportation for mobility in Los Angeles and has instituted several programs to further his agenda.

EDITORIAL

Engineering Politics

An American tradition continues in November. Yes, we do celebrate Thanksgiving on this month. I am talking about the other tradition though, elections. This particular year is very historic indeed. Faced with the worst financial crisis in our history, people all over the world are anticipating the results of our Presidential Elections with the hope that a new administration would be able to influence worldwide economic recovery. While our politics are local, our influence is certainly global.

Los Angeles Section President Don Sepulveda, P.E. has brought to light the importance of the gasoline tax, projects associated with Measure R, and the proposed California Light Rail project. We look at these to be designed to create jobs for many in the state with the intent of spurring the struggling economy.

Self-serving perceptions aside, we should be cognizant of the implications of the decisions we will be making during the upcoming election. A lot is at stake here. Please vote wisely.

In this issue of your newsletter, we highlight a few of our Orange and San Luis Obispo's Branch activities. We also highlight some very important announcements concerning the 2009 Leadership Training in Government Relations Program to be held in Washington, DC, the deadline for the State Public Affairs Grants, and a request for your participation in the upcoming 2009 Infrastructure Report Card.

Finally, we congratulate the winners of this year's Section Awards.

Enjoy this issue of your newsletter.

- Dr. Cris B. Liban, P.E.

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.

ASCE's 2008
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Drive Depends on You!

ARTICLE

What's Happening in the Some of Our Branches

Orange County Branch

The Orange County Branch held its annual field trip on August 21, 2008, as a tour of the Port of Long Beach. Eighty members boarded a boat and were hosted by Mr. Al Moro, the Deputy Director of Engineering for the Port. The tour included an explanation of the existing facilities and future expansions of the container services that convey many of the goods sold throughout the United States.

The Branch's September lunch meeting was held on the 18th and featured a presentation of the Tustin Legacy project infrastructure status. Over 100 Branch members joined the event to hear City of Tustin Development Services Manager, Doug Anderson, review the history of the former Marine Air Station and its conversion to civilian use. This 1,600 acre project site includes every type of infrastructure challenge that can be imagined and is being developed in phases. The site also contains the historic lighter than air (blimp) buildings that are ASCE designated historic Civil Engineering facilities.

On October 16, 2008, a lunch meeting was held to hear a talk by ASCE Fellow Dr. Jeffrey Keaton on quantifying the risk of loss from landslides. The talk covered the engineering factors and systematic approaches taken to evaluate landslide potential and how insurance companies use this information.

All are also invited to the Branch's November dinner meeting to be held on the 20th and will feature student fellowship night with student chapters from UCI, CSUF and CSULB, a History and Heritage Committee presentation, the installation of new Board Officers, and a talk by the Society President-Elect Mr. Blaine Leonard. For details of these events, please visit our web page at www.asceoc.org.

San Luis Obispo Branch

The San Luis Obispo Branch held a Public Agency Forum for their September luncheon that was very well attended. After the Public Works Directors and/or City Engineers from three cities and one County speakers introduced themselves, attendees asked a broad range of interesting questions. New officers for 2008-09 were also installed, and outgoing officers were thanked for their year, and in some cases, years, of service. Members also attended a webinar, entitled "What An Engineer Needs To Know To Survive andThrive: Soft Skills, People Skills, and Leadership Traits" in September. The Branch continues to publish their monthly newsletter, which features President's Perspective, Meet the Member and Luncheon Topic articles, and clean their adopted stretch of highway every other month.

Find out the latest Section & Branch news @ www.ascelasection.org

DISASTER TRAINING

Classes are being organized for volunteers under the auspicies of the State of California, Office of Emergency Services (OES) to help in the event of a major disaster. Classes will be held in alternate 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 please contact the ASCE Disaster Preparedness Committee Chairman. The class lasts 5-6 hours and the cost is \$15. Classes are midweek and start at 9 or 10 AM.

To register for the class, submit your name along with your telephone number, fax number, e-mail address, and zip code. You will be contacted when 10 or more individuals request a class. The maximum number in a 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 contact person, phone, fax, and e-mail. You will be contacted to make arrangements. The class should have at least 10 and not more than about 20.

Thank you for your support of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Jack W. Rolston
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EARTHQUAKE!!!

Not...But, Be a Part of History!

Participate in the largest earthquake drill in U.S. history taking place as part of the Great Southern California ShakeOut Thursday, Nov.13, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Registration information can be found at http://iec.lacity.org/html/registration.html.

Attend the Los Angeles International Earthquake Conference, Nov. 12 through 14 in Downtown Los Angeles, and witness the largest effort ever undertaken to prepare Southern California communities and governments for the next major earthquake.

Bring home the knowledge and experience of the world's leading seismic and emergency response experts to your community.

The sessions, excursions, demonstrations and other activities of the Conference will let you go behind the scenes and see the policies, science and people behind the Great Southern California ShakeOut.

Conference Excursions Include...

City of Los Angeles Emergency Operations Center (EOC) - See the City's cutting-edge EOC go live during a Level 4 activation during the drill.

Urban Search and Rescue Demonstration - Watch the L.A. City Fire Department go into action in a boots-on-the-ground urban search and rescue drill.

NEES@UCLA "Shaketable" Earthquake Simulator – See the physical effects of an earthquake during a demonstration of the incredible NEES@UCLA Shaketable.

See you there!

2009 Leadership Training in Government Relations Scheduled

The 2009 Leadership Training in Government Relations Program, or the "Legislative Fly-In," will take place March 25-26, 2009 in Washington, D.C. Applications will be available shortly at http://www.asce.org/govrel.

This day-and-a-half program provides Section leaders and interested ASCE members with training on important civil engineering issues and how to establish and maintain relationships with elected officials.

The 2009 Program will coincide with the release of the 2009 Report Card for America's Infrastructure, and attendees will be the first to bring this message of infrastructure renewal to elected leaders on Capitol Hill.

For further information contact ASCE Government Relations at govwash@asce.org or 202-789-7850.

State Public Affairs Grants

The State Public Affairs Grants (SPAG) program is a resource to help ASCE Sections undertake public relations (PR) and government relations (GR) projects at the grassroots level. The goal of the program is to enhance the image of civil engineers as leaders and experts on America's vital infrastructure systems and to encourage advocacy on issues that are important to civil engineers. SPAG can provide funding of up to \$7,500 for projects.

Please don't let this opportunity pass you by. Take time to enhance the image of civil engineers as leaders and experts on America's vital infrastructure systems and to encourage advocacy on behalf of issues that are important to civil engineers.

SPAG proposals must be submitted by November 7.

For more information, proposal guidelines and more visit http://www.asce.org/inside/spag.cfm

Shape Results of the '09 Report Card — Take Our Survey

As a civil engineer working in your community, you're more attuned than typical residents to the area's infrastructure challenges. Which ones are of greatest concern? Share them by taking a survey that will help ASCE ready its 2009 Report Card for America's Infrastructure. The survey is your way of telling us what ought to be emphasized in the new Report Card, whether the biggest problems in your community are in roads, transit, the energy grid, wastewater or other areas.

The survey is open to ASCE members only; your personal information will not be shared. Take it by visiting:

continued

Perhaps the most important of these programs is Measure R that has been added to the ballot this year. For those of those that are not familiar with it, Measure R institutes a half cent sales tax increase in Los Angeles to fund transportation projects. There are several programs that will move forward with this funding, including; the "subway to the sea", the second phase of the Exposition Light Rail Line, expansion of the Gold Line into San Gabriel Valley and into Montclair, and a downtown regional connector, just to name a few. These projects will affect thousands in Los Angeles by providing efficient transit between additional parts of the city in addition to removing many vehicles off of the highways. As engineers, we understand that when we construct a rail line we remove a significant amount of vehicles off of the roadways adjacent to the rail line.

Just as important as constructing new transportation facilities in southern California is the upgrade of existing systems and repairs to our infrastructure. In addition to funding transportation projects, Measure R will provide funding for advanced technologies to be used in existing rail systems and also to address some of the existing infrastructure issues facing southern California. We have bridges that need repairs or upgrades. We also have rail systems that have some components that are out of date. Newer technologies may be available to address safety concerns. While we all know that our bridges and transportation systems are in compliance with federal and state regulations, we also know that there are things that we can do to make them better. It is not that our rail systems are unsafe, quite the contrary, it is about enhancements to rail safety that can prevent the accidents of the future.

At the state level, there is a upcoming proposition for the initial funding of a high speed train system in California: similar to what you see in Europe and Japan and provide efficient transportation between Los Angeles and major cities in California, including San Francisco, Sacramento, and San Diego. Such a system will allow us to go to San Francisco in a little over two hours, about the same time it takes us to fly. In addition, this system will reduce greenhouse gases by providing a clean alternative for transportation up and down the Central Valley in California. A program level environmental document has been approved and work is underway on corridor specific environmental documents.

This \$10 billion bond measure will provide funding for the initial efforts including corridor environmental work and preliminary engineering, and other early work important to the system. The total price tag for this system is estimated to be about \$45 billion. While we have to ask ourselves if we can afford this, we also have to ask ourselves if we can afford NOT to do this. On the surface it appears that the current state of the economy, including both the federal and state budget deficits, will not allow such an investment. In reality, the investment is an investment into the economy and future of our state. Initial estimates show that 150,000 new jobs will be created with the construction of the project, with about 450,000 permanent jobs created when the system is in full operation. The benefits of the project cannot be ignored.

Over the next several weeks all of us will have the opportunity to talk about these topics with friends, neighbors, and co-workers. It is up to us to communicate the importance of these issues and discuss the benefits and impacts to our society. As civil engineers, we have a grasp of the infrastructure issues in California, and are the most capable of getting the word out about the realities of this issue and

how it relates to the very prominent issue of the economy. After all, the various issues that are facing us; infrastructure, economy, employment, and education are all interconnected. It is up to us to impact our communities by informing others about the realities of the issues and how important it is to provide for the future.

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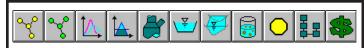
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