

Los Angeles Section

Monthly: Est. 1913

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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



Our May newsletter elicited the largest response from readers since my term as Section President began. Thank you to those who emailed or called. I was pleased that several section members took time to comment on ASCE's Code of Ethics and to express support for qualifications-based selection (QBS). That took some of the sting out of my disappointment when I heard that the QBS Bill (SB 1424) was killed in the California Senate Business and Professions Committee (see the article "This Month in Sacramento" by Richard Markuson in this issue of the LA Section Newsletter).

Kudos to Joseph Reichenberger, Professor of Civil Engineering and Environmental Science at LMU, who brings the Code of Ethics and the principles of QBS into the classroom. Joe reports that he discusses the Code and has student teams take on case studies and present to class in the senior capstone design class. Joe goes on to say, "I also have a lecture on QBS and hoping that over time the current practice of 'get some bids for the design' or the 'ugly "B" word' as I call it, will be a thing of the past. Maybe by working on young minds we can change this over time." I believe it will, Joe, and I hope similar lessons are being taught in the other universities within our Section and beyond. It will only serve to strengthen and elevate our profession in the years and generations ahead.

I have a few other notes and thoughts to share this month.

High-Speed Rail: In May, ASCE's Region 9 Governors (Region 9 includes the entire state of California, which is comprised of four Sections, including ours), voted unanimously to issue a letter of support for California high-speed rail. The governors cited the benefits of high-speed rail, including job creation, faster on-ground travel, easing the crowding of freeways and airports, stimulation of new technologies, and helping the state meet greenhouse-gas-reduction mandates as primary reasons for support. When this letter becomes available, we will reprint it in this newsletter for the benefit of our Section members. While the California high-speed rail project remains a polarizing subject primarily because of its high cost, my personal view is that we must consider high speed rail as an option as California figures out how to ensure mobility for its ever-growing population (expected to reach 60 million by 2050). Further, it is essential that the United States comes up with solutions to the challenges of transportation in the 21st century if we are to maintain our economic advantage in the world. With this high-speed rail project, California would remain the transportation role model for the rest of the country, just as we were when we introduced the nation to the concept of freeways. I think it would be very shortsighted of us to drop our efforts to create an additional mode of transportation, especially one that has been successfully implemented in other parts of the world. Those who ask "can we afford to do it?" in turn should be asked "can we afford not to?"

Water Defense: California is the recipient of a lot of criticism these days, so it was nice to learn that our state got high marks for preparation for potential water-related impacts of climate change. This is according to a recent report by the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC). Many civil engineers, agencies, and developers know the NRDC as an opponent to our projects. In fact, the NRDC is one of the nation's most powerful environmental groups with a full complement of attorneys representing over 1.3 million members. In its report, the NRDC asserts that preparing for the impacts of a changing climate requires that states confront reality and prioritize climate change adaptation to reduce local water risks and create healthier

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A Summer of Engineering Awareness

Summer vacations have begun. We will soon be going out our ways to experience the various things that our world has to offer. But as you traverse these adventures, let's not forget the things created by our own minds and hands, our engineering achievements.

I always point these things out to my son, who is now 11. I create excitement for him when I talk about how buildings and bridges are actually built, how planes are flown, how cars are created, or as simple as how desks and chairs are made. These begin as concepts in someone's mind, then they design the specific parts, and put them together to create a masterpiece that serves as the monument to the person or people who first thought about them. I talk about how science, technology and engineering remains to be a growth industry because so few of our kids actually go on and make a career out of them. And finally, I talk about the respect that people in these fields gain—but an underrepresented respect, not yet matching those of doctors, firefighters, police, and the like. We do not tout much about our engineering achievements, although all of them span all of the things that humans do and experience. Our contributions are ubiquitous.

As you go out for vacation this summer, consider talking to others about how great your profession is; and how we as an organization actually bring value and change to the way we all live.

This is the continuing essence of this issue. Los Angeles Section President John Hogan, P.E., LEED AP, provides us with some views on comments he had received specifically on qualification-based selection. He also provides some support on the importance of creating one of the first high-speed rail segments in the country, as well as California's role in climate change adaptation, specifically in the area of water. We then move on to congratulate some of our Section students who recently bagged a number of awards; along with a regular feature on specific legislative updates from Sacramento. We cap our issue with an article on a new initiative to designate California Historic Engineering Landmarks.

We will have one more issue (July 2012) before we go dark for the summer. I encourage you to at least make one person aware of who you are as an engineer, beginning now.

Enjoy this issue of your newsletter!

—Dr. Cris B. Liban, P.E.

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communities. The potential climate change impacts include precipitation changes, water supply challenges, increased flooding, sea level rise, increased erosion, and sea water intrusion. California was among the nine best-prepared states. In case you are wondering, Texas was in the lowest ranked group of states, those that have done either nothing at all or very little to prepare.

Section News: For the second straight year, a student from an LA Section student chapter won the national Daniel W. Mead contest for students. In 2011, the honoree was Christine Truong of CSU Long Beach. This year's winner is Jay Pastor of CSU Northridge. Congratulations, Jay—I am looking forward to reading your paper.

In late April, I attended the unveiling of the 2012 Report Card on Kern County's Infrastructure, an effort spearheaded by the LA Section's Southern San Joaquin Branch. Like the other report cards we have seen in recent times, the grades for Kern County's infrastructure leave a lot to be desired. It was encouraging, however, to see the broad coalition of organizations that participated in the report card preparation and the number of elected officials that were represented at the unveiling. Over time, I am confident that ASCE report card efforts will bring about the improvements that our communities so greatly need.

An example of an infrastructure project that is moving ahead is the Metro Green Line extension to LAX. Our MLAB Air Transport Technical Group was treated to an update on this important project at its April luncheon meeting. This project certainly is and will present a multitude of opportunities for Civil Engineers in both the public and private sector. I have attended a variety of LA Section technical group meetings in recent years and this one was no different from the others: the presentation and the interaction among the ASCE members in attendance were very enlightening.

These accomplishments and events, and others like them that take place each month within our Section, are constant reminders of the many benefits of membership in the Los Angeles Section of ASCE. I hope you take advantage, to the fullest extent possible, of such offerings. Who knows how far your career may soar as a result?

ANNOUNCEMENT

Section Members Elected to Distinguished Membership

The Board of Direction recently elected 11 members to the esteemed honor of Distinguished Membership, increasing the number of professionals who have ever been selected to 625. The Class of 2012 will be formally inducted Oct. 18 at the 142nd ASCE Annual Civil Engineering Conference in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

The Class of 2012 currently reside in: **Robert E. Alger, P.E., Dist.M.ASCE** (Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers); **Glen T. Daigger, Ph.D., P.E., BCEE, Dist.M.ASCE, NAE** (Colorado Section); **David Darwin, Ph.D., P.E., F.SEI, Dist.M.ASCE** (Kansas Section); **James M. Fisher, Ph.D., P.E., Dist.M.ASCE** (Florida Section); **Nicholas J. Garber, Ph.D., P.E., Dist.M.ASCE, NAE** (Virginia Section); **Achintya Haldar, Ph.D., P.E., Dist.M.ASCE** (Arizona Section); **Perry L. McCarty, Sc.D., Dist.M.ASCE, NAE** (San Francisco Section); **Thomas M. Murray, Ph.D., P.E., Dist.M.ASCE, NAE** (Virginia Section); **George F. Pinder, Ph.D., Dist.M.ASCE, NAE** (Vermont Section); **Bruce E. Rittmann, Ph.D., Dist.M.ASCE, NAE** (Arizona Section); and **Richard L. Tucker, Ph.D., P.E., Dist.M.ASCE, NAE, NAC** (Texas Section).

Promote your members through a Distinguished Member nomination. Nominations are due Oct. 1.

Congratulations to Student Organization Award Winners!

The Los Angeles Section was recently notified that the following student chapters and individuals from our Section have been selected for national awards:

- Robert Ridgeway Award Finalist: Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
- Distinguished Chapter Award (Region 9): Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
- Letters of Honorable Mention: Cal Poly, Pomona

- Outstanding Faculty Advisor Award: Gregg Fiegel, Ph.D., P.E., M.ASCE—Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
- Faculty Advisor Certificate of Commendation: Seema Shah-Fairbank, P.E., M.ASCE—Cal Poly Pomona

Congratulations to the student chapters at both Cal Polys and to their advisors. The Section commends your efforts to raise the bar and for setting a great example for all of the student members within the Section.

Congratulations to Jay Pastor, Mead Prize for Students Winner

The Los Angeles Section would like to congratulate **Mr. Jay Pastor, S.M. ASCE**, a member of the MLAB Branch and student at Cal State University Northridge, who has been selected to receive the **Daniel W. Mead Prize for Students**. Established in 1939 in honor of the 67th president of the ASCE, the Daniel W. Mead Student Contest provides an opportunity for young civil engineers to further their professional development and gain national attention by addressing ethical issues affecting the civil-engineering profession. Each year the specific topic of the contest is selected by the ASCE Committee on Student Services. Additional information and recipient photographs are available at www.asce.org/awards.

ASCEville Opens Spillway to Further Exploration of Civil Engineering

The next time a kid asks, "Civil what?", take them to ASCEville! Visitors to ASCEville (at www.asceville.org) are now able to explore information about project areas civil engineers work in. ASCEville will help them better understand how civil engineers find technological solutions to some of the world's most interesting challenges.

Through exploration of dams, bridges, roads and transportation, water systems, sustainability, and disaster response, kids will learn more about what civil engineers do, and see the big contributions they make to the world around us. In the dams section, for example, kids learn that dams make modern life possible. They also learn about different types of dam structures, what materials are used to make dams and how engineers overcome forces of nature to build dams, protect people and harness the power of water.

Created for kids in grades 3–7, ASCEville offers engaging material that is fun, interactive and educational. While you're there, check out the sustainability game on the home page and search for 20 sustainable features the show how technology is used to protect the environment, save energy and ensure a safe water supply.

Nominee for L.A. Section Secretary Named; Term to Begin in October

The April 2012 Newsletter included an announcement of the nominees for the open positions for the Los Angeles Section Board of Directors for terms beginning October 2012. Recently, the Los Angeles Section was notified by Amber Girard that due to a job transfer to Montana, she is unable to accept the nomination for the office of Secretary.

Therefore, the Nominating Committee has made the following amended recommendation to the Board of Directors for the term beginning October 2012:

Secretary (for a two-year term):

- Androush Danielians, P.E., AECOM

In accordance with Article 4, Section 4.3.6, of the current Los Angeles Section Bylaws:

"Additional nominations for each office to be filled may be made by a petition signed by no less than fifty (50) Voting Members of the Section provided that such a petition is accompanied by a written acceptance of the nomination by the nominee and is filed with the Secretary within 30 days after the announcement of the nominees.

"The Voting Member grades, as defined in the Los Angeles Section Constitution, Article 2, Section 2.2.1, are Associate Member, Member, Fellow Member, and Distinguished Member, whose dues are current or who are granted a Section dues exemption."

Petitions are due within 30 days of the distribution date of this announcement and should be submitted to:

Secretary, Los Angeles Section ASCE
c/o Gayle Stewert Enterprises, Inc.
1415 Warner Ave.
Tustin, CA 92780

Legislative Update: This Month in Sacramento

By Richard Markuson

Continuing Education Bill Set for May Hearing

Region 9 supported Senate Bill 975 that clarifies who can impose by regulation, the experience and education required to practice engineering is scheduled to be heard May 7 in the Senate Business & Professions Committee.

Licensure Bill Dead

Senator Mimi Walters has let her SB 1061 die in the Senate Business & Professions Committee without a hearing. The bill was identical to a bill she introduced in 2011 that was defeated in the same committee just a few months ago. Region 9, ACEC-CA and PEGC all opposed the bill as unworkable. It would have converted the nine existing title acts into practice acts and permitted any licensee to practice in any branch – without any requirement to demonstrate minimum competency.

Public Employee Bill Shelved

A controversial bill—AB 1808—that would have defined as public employees, many workers hired by public agencies under a professional services contract has died without a hearing. The bill would have placed many public agencies that utilize on-call contracts for engineering, surveying and inspection in a difficult position.

VMT Measure Runs Out of Gas

AB 1627 by Assembly member Dickinson has died. It would have required the Office of Planning and Research, not later than January 1, 2014, to prepare and make available a manual containing specified information designed to be used by local governments, local agencies, and project developers to evaluate and incorporate measures and strategies to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in new residential and commercial building projects. Many were concerned that the study would have resulted in an eventual requirement that new projects include a VMT reduction mandate. Still active is AB 441 that would require that the California Transportation Commission, by no later than 2014, include voluntary health and health equity factors, strategies, goals, and objectives in the guidelines promulgated by the commission for the preparation of regional transportation plans.

Plan for Food Deserts

A new website from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) shows that 10% of the country is now a “food desert.” The Food Desert Locator is an online map highlighting thousands of areas where, the USDA says, low-income families have little or no access to healthy fresh food. First identified in Scotland in the 1990s, food deserts have come to epitomize urban decay. They suggest images of endless fast-food restaurants and convenience stores serving fatty, sugary junk food to overweight customers who have never tasted a Brussels sprout. AB 1897 plans to address this by requiring the land use element of a city or county general plan to identify food deserts within the city or county and consider zoning changes to mitigate those areas currently designated as food deserts.

Interior Designer Bill Falters

A long running battle to establish a state license for interior designers has again failed to advance. AB 2482 would have established the California Registered Interior Designers’ Board for the purpose of licensing

and regulating registered interior design. This effort to license designers dates back over 20 years and is opposed by community colleges (who train interior designers) and contractor groups as adding to the complexity of new construction and remodeling.

QBS Bill Killed

PEGC killed SB 1424 in the Senate Business and Professions Committee. The bill would have required Architects, Engineers and Land Surveyors to comply with QBS for public contracts or be subject to discipline by their respective licensure boards. PEGC stated that the “qualification based selection system does not provide the best deal to the taxpayer because cost is not the primary rationale for awarding contracts.” In the face of PEGC’s opposition, none of the Democrats on the Committee would vote for the bill.

Rainwater Capture Act of 2012

AB 1750 is on the floor of the Assembly awaiting final passage. This bill would enact the Rainwater Capture Act of 2012, which would authorize residential, commercial, and governmental landowners to install, maintain, and operate rain barrel systems, as defined, and rainwater capture systems, as defined, for specified purposes, provided that the systems comply with specified requirements.

Temporary License

Business and Professions Code §6760 allows for the State to grant a temporary, 180-day license to an engineer not licensed in California if he/she meets a variety of criteria. ASCE Region 9 has been asked if this authority should be modified or sunset. If you have an opinion, please contact Region 9 Government Relations Committee Chairman Shahn Ahmad.

Spring 2012 Board Bulletin

The Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists Spring 2012 Board Bulletin is now available on the Board’s website.

New Fees Take Effect

New application and examination fees for engineers and land surveyors are now in effect. New examination fees for geologists will go into effect on May 23, 2012. For more information, paste the following link into your browser. http://www.pels.ca.gov/applicants/new_fees.pdf

Recent Reports

The Legislative Analyst’s Office has released a report that provides update on the 2011–12 year-to-date state personal income tax and corporation tax collections, finds “to date, results for April alone are on track to be over \$2 billion below the administration’s most recent budget forecast for the month,” also says the state’s revenues “could be a few billion dollars below the administration’s January forecast in both 2011-12 and 2012-13.”

The Senate Office of Oversight and Outcomes has released its report “Finding The Sweet Spot: Green Energy Incentives and Job Creation,” recommends creating a “state-sponsored ‘green bank’ that would loan money to new businesses willing to manufacture in California.”

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California Historic Civil Engineering Landmarks

By Brent C. Siemer, P.E., F.ASCE
ASCE Region 9 Governor

As I get older, I find myself contemplating the hereafter. I walk into a room and wonder, "Now what was I here after?" I know the information is up there, but the little grey cells just won't pass it along. And why does it require that trip back to the other room to reboot my system? Trying to recall what I already know continues to be one of life's unending challenges.

So then, what do hieroglyphics, petroglyphs, punched cards, paper tape, floppy discs and CDs all have in common? They all represent mankind's attempts to save important information so it can be recalled in the future. Unfortunately, it never fails that each successive advance in technology seems to lose as much as it saves. While the "data" might be preserved, our ability to read and interpret is frequently lost. Even when a culture inscribes and applies their "data" to solid lasting rock, the meaning can still be lost to the ages. Even after years of study, an archeologist might learn what the hieroglyphics say, but may never really know what they mean. Even an Internet search of "petroglyphs" will reveal widely differing opinions as to their significance and meaning.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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The LAO has released its report, "The 2012-13 Budget: Funding Requests for High-Speed Rail," recommends the Legislature "not approve" the Governor's budget proposals to provide "\$5.9 billion to continue the high-speed rail project-\$2.6 billion in state bond funds matched with \$3.3 billion in federal funds," finds funding for the project "remains highly speculative and important details have not been sorted out."

Gov. Brown released two lists containing "more than 700 unnecessary bureaucratic reports currently required by law" he proposes for elimination, says Dept. of Finance "will direct" Legislative Counsel to stop tracking these 343 reports, "which will effectively end agency and department production requirements;" identifies these 375 reports which "require legislative action to eliminate."

Next 10 releases its "California Green Innovation Index," examines CA's solar industry in the wake of Solyndra's collapse; tracks state's clean tech patents, investment, innovation, energy productivity, emissions, etc.

The LAO has released its hearing handout, "Meeting the Environmental Goals of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency," which was presented to the Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 2 on Resources, Environmental Protection, Energy and Transportation, says Tahoe Regional Planning Agency seeks to improve water clarity through the Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP), says the Governor's budget proposes a total of \$32 million for various state departments to implement EIP projects in 2012-13, which is a decrease of about \$11 million (26 percent) from the current year level of expenditures.

Dept. of Water Resources releases Draft Urban Level of Flood Protection Criteria, seeks comments on draft rules to help cities and counties approve developer permits in flood zones.

More recently, our constantly evolving technology is creating exponentially more data even as it is leaving behind "legacy" or "dead media." In 1997, filmmaker Terry Sanders (Into the Future) found that archives of analyzed NASA space exploration data were now "dead media" because the computers that read the tapes were already obsolete. On a personal level, I have drawers full of cassette tapes and floppy discs, all of it dead (or dying) media that I have created or inherited. I hang on to it only because my desire to remember the past is a powerful one.

And so, I finally segue to Historic Civil Engineering Landmarks. Our Society established the National program in 1964 to recognize engineering achievements in a permanent and lasting way. This program serves to help us preserve and recall the significance of these projects and the engineers who designed and built them. Over 250 National Historic Civil Engineering Landmarks have been designated, of which fourteen are within California. These, along with the year they were built, include:

- Alvord Lake Bridge, 1889
- Arroyo Seco Parkway, 1940
- Bidwell Bar Bridge, 1856
- Blimp Hangars, 1943
- Bridgeport Covered Bridge, 1862
- Central Pacific Railroad, 1863-1869
- Colorado River Aqueduct, 1933-1941
- First Owens River-Los Angeles
- Aqueduct, 1913
- Folsom Hydroelectric Power System, 1895
- Golden Gate Bridge, 1937
- Pelton Impulse Water Wheel, 1878
- San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, 1937
- Sweetwater Dam, 1888
- Tehachapi Pass Railroad Line, 1876.

As a state, all of our four Sections have actively promoted State Historic Civil Engineering Landmarks. This activity was especially heightened during our Nation's Bicentennial in 1976. However, interest has ebbed over time and this has become a concern to the Region. Therefore, Region 9 Board has recently adopted Rules of Policy and Procedure for California Historic Civil Engineering Landmark Designation.

Applications for State designation will be sponsored by the Section and reviewed by the Region board. The criteria under which these applications will be evaluated are as follows:

- The nominated project must be of historic civil engineering significance within the State of California. The project does not have to be designed or constructed by a civil engineer.
- The projects must have some special uniqueness (e.g., a first project constructed); or have made some significant contribution (e.g. the first project designed by a particular method); or utilized a unique or significant construction or engineering technique.
- The project itself must have contributed to the development of the State of California or at least a very large region.
- Projects should be generally available to the public view. Nominated projects should be at least 50 years old.

Now is the time to consider submitting an application for California Historic Civil Engineering Landmark Designation. I freely admit that it requires a great deal of time and hard work to prepare an application; however, it will only be more difficult if the records of our greatest engineering achievements become "legacy" or "dead media."

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