

# Los Angeles Section

*Monthly: Est. 1913*

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jerry Burke, P.E., M.ASCE, APM, QSD, ENV SP  
Los Angeles Section President

VOL. LVII NO. 11

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## CUT & PASTE



When I began my career in Civil Engineering over 28 years ago , we used to do something called “drafting” memos & letters on sheets of paper by hand. Next we’d give the hand drafted memo/letter to the administrative staff who then typed it up on machines that were like computers, but they weren’t. It was a monitor and CPU of sorts. All it could do was take in the text then print it out. They weren’t a whole lot more advanced than a typewriter (you’ll need to google typewriter).

One thing I soon learned was **not** to have change after change or reword after reword of your “draft” memo. If you did, it would go to the bottom of the stack to wait its turn in line. If you gave the administrative staff edit after edit your work might have to wait longer or you’d get it back with a note “is this the last edit?”. If it got too bad, your supervisor would have a talk with you about focusing your thoughts and thinking through your work.

When we were held accountable that way, we really, really thought through our draft documents. In fact, you might go through one or two **handwritten** drafts before you prepared the final version to submit to administrative staff. This was a good thing. It forced us young engineers to think out our thoughts, not just get something in line as a place holder. It taught us to do things right the first time.

Then personal computers came along and with them, you could prepare memos yourself! On a PC you could even use text from previous documents which were similar in nature to the project you were currently working on. Just cut and paste the same text! (Yes, the phrase “cut and paste” does refer to real cutting and real pasting, but I’m focusing on electronic cutting and pasting in this article as that’s when it seems to me to have gotten more abused). About this same time preparing drawings in CADD came along and with it this same “time saving” ability. And guess what? You could do the same thing in CADD, cut and paste not only text but details from similar drawings and put in them on your current projects plans!

It has been said with every new solution comes a new set of problems. In my career I have seen an abuse of cut and paste so many times. Maybe that’s not the right way to put it. Cut and paste is only an action. The problem comes with our lack of doing a full QA/QC on our work product to see if our thoughts were accurately captured and communicated in the drawings/documents. When I was City Engineer for a City in Los Angeles County not too long ago and we saw the name of a different city in a submittal... we stopped looking at the documents, sent them back, asked the Civil to perform QA/QC then resubmit.

*continued on page 3*



# New Region 9 Governor Perspective

by Rossana G. D'Antonio, P.E., G.E., F. ASCE, ASCE Region 9 Governor-At-Large from the Los Angeles Section



I just returned from attending the ASCE International Conference on Sustainable Infrastructure in New York City and I'm feeling energized and inspired. As you can clearly deduce from the name, the conference promotes sustainability. Which got me thinking about what sustainability means to me especially as I embark on my new role as Region Governor of the Los Angeles Section for California.

Society is facing daunting current day challenges that will task our civil engineering profession. Our technical and leadership skills are needed now more than ever to address climate change, aging infrastructure, long-term resiliency needs, dwindling financial resources, and increased poverty levels, just to name a few. Civil engineers will be tasked with finding solutions to problems never before faced. Decisions we make today will have huge economic and social impacts not only to today's society but to future generations.

It is clear that these new challenges require new approaches based on new types of thinking. And while we are all trying to figure things out, we do not have to go at it alone. The conference made it clear that cross collaboration and knowledge sharing goes a long way and we are stronger together. ASCE has always been a great resource for me going back to my college days and I have remained active throughout the years in several different capacities. It is where I first established professional relationships that I carry with me to this day. In September, I was sworn in as Region Governor at ASCE Headquarters in Reston, Virginia during the President's & Governor's Forum and Leadership Orientation Weekend. The event was awe inspiring and I do not take this responsibility lightly. Arriving for the first time at the ASCE mothership felt like coming home. I had the privilege of meeting the dedicated ASCE staff that work diligently and behind-the-scenes in strengthening our profession at a global level. The event also brought together dozens of volunteers just like me committed at giving back to a profession we love.

That weekend reminded me that I follow in the footsteps of those that came before me. And, yes, in order to maintain a sustainable leadership pipeline, it will be imperative that my shoulders serve as a foundation for future generations. We must inspire them to think holistically with economic, social, and environmental issues in mind; to innovate, remain curious, and pursue the art of the possible; and broaden the profession's technical excellence and professional leadership. What better way to do so than to encourage working to implement ASCE's goals and strategic initiatives. From what I see, the next generation is ready, able and willing to do so and I am hopeful in what the future holds.

As I embark on this three-year term as Governor, my plan is to promote leadership development, support the local Sections and Branches on any issues that may arise, provide outreach to younger member forums and student chapters, and improve member service. These are exciting times for me and our civil engineering profession. Our profession is in the midst of a transformation, a renaissance of sorts. We all have the opportunity to lead the way in influencing change and I am excited about venturing on this journey together. I hope to meet many of you throughout Region 9 and share any insight I may have on the value of ASCE participation as well as my experience with the ASCE initiatives. It is truly an honor to serve as Region Governor! If you would like to get in touch with me, please contact me at [rdanton@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:rdanton@dpw.lacounty.gov)

ARTICLE

## Award Announcement



**Mr. Elon Musk, A.M.ASCE** from the Metropolitan Los Angeles Branch of the Los Angeles Section has been selected by the **Aerospace Division of the American Society of Civil Engineers** to receive the **2018 Columbia Medal** "For demonstrated and continuing excellence in pushing the state of the art of designing, building, flying and landing reusable orbital rockets changing the access to space commercially and pushing the state of the art in transportation and

electrical vehicles."

If you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Jane Alspach, Senior Manager, Honors and Awards at 1-800-548-2723, extension 6382 or at [jalspach@asce.org](mailto:jalspach@asce.org).



To be totally transparent, a few weeks ago I did the very thing I'm pointing out we should not do. I didn't do a full review of a document which had cut and paste in it before I submitted it. It was very frustrating. But the worst thing was that it was embarrassing, because I knew better.

My boss says we have four options in the work we produce: 1 - On time and right. 2 - Late and right. 3 - On time and wrong. 4 - Late and wrong. Options 3 and 4 are not acceptable.

I hope you will agree that one of the easiest and simplest ways to elevate the stature of the Civil Engineering profession is for you and I to become the person in our office with a reputation of producing work that is either option 1 or 2. Become known as the person in your office that co-workers say, "ask him/her to review it, they go through everything with a fine tooth comb". Do not rely on cut and paste from a previous project.

So, with 2018 rapidly approaching, one of my New Year's resolutions is do not trust cut and paste. Read every word, scan every drawing and think about the work before it leaves my desk. Each project is different and needs our full attention. For me that's been a lesson learned from cutting and pasting.

Speaking of lessons learned, I spoke with a couple of engineers at the 2017 Section Awards lunch in October about what lessons they learned from their award winning projects and would they be willing

to share 2 or 3 nuggets from their award winning projects as a lunch meeting. Most everyone said yes. Look for a Lesson Learned Lunch series next year.

In December I'll be attending the Life Member Group Christmas lunch and I'm looking forward to it. Imagine what lesson's learned that group has. Wouldn't it be neat to learn life lessons from someone with 30 plus years of experience who was willing to share? Wouldn't it be horrible for someone to have 30 plus years of lesson's learned and not share it before their life is up? If you answered yes to either go to the website for the branch in your area and sign up to become a part of mentoring.

As always, check the Branch/YMF webpage and/or Facebook page for upcoming events. One coming up in Orange County is:

**EWRI - Maintaining Essential Water Infrastructure:**  
**AB 2488 (Dababneh)**  
**Thursday, December 7, 11:30am – 1:00pm**  
**Dave and Busters**  
**Irvine Spectrum**  
**661 Spectrum Center Drive, Irvine, CA 92618**

I hope you and your family have a wonderful, safe Holiday Season and Happy New year!

It is a pleasure to serve as your President.



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# State Investments and Legislative Update

by Richard Markuson, CA Region 9 Legislative Advocate



**Apply Today for the 2018 Water Leaders Class.** Applications are now being accepted for the 2018 William R. Gianelli Water Leaders Class. The one-year program fosters a deeper knowledge of water issues and leadership skills. Criteria for acceptance include a commitment to understanding water issues and an interest in seeking leadership roles on public boards and commissions, or key staff positions. Applications for the yearlong program

are due by Dec. 5.

**Legislation:** The California State Legislature is currently on hiatus with the new session scheduled to begin in January 2018. Members are encouraged to hold "in-home District" meetings with their elected officials while the legislators are out of session. Here is the final status of Region 9 bills:

- **AB 28 (Frazier): Department of Transportation: environmental review process: federal pilot program - Support:** Re-enacts, until January 1, 2020, Caltrans' authority to waive its 11th Amendment right to sovereign immunity from lawsuits brought in federal court thereby allowing Caltrans to continue assuming the role of the U.S. DOT for NEPA decision making. **Chaptered**
- **AB 56 (Holden): IBank Funding to Infrastructure Supporting Housing Production - Support:** Permits the IBank, established in 1994, to promote "economic revitalization, enable future development, and encourage a healthy climate for jobs in California" for financing the infrastructure that supports housing production. **Chaptered**
- **AB 544 (Bloom): Vehicles: High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes - Support:** Creates a new program to grant, until September 30, 2025, federal inherently low emission vehicles (ILEVs) and transitional zero-emission vehicles (TZEVs) access to high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes for approximately a four-year period, regardless of vehicle occupancy level. **Chaptered**
- **AB 994 (Muratsuchi): Health care districts: design-build - Support:** allows the board of directors of the Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) to use design-build contracting for construction of buildings. **Chaptered**
- **AB 1000 (Friedman): Water conveyance: use of facility with unused capacity - Oppose** would have prohibited a transfer of water from using a water conveyance facility that has unused capacity to transfer water from a groundwater basin as specified, unless the State Lands Commission, in consultation with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, finds that the transfer of the water will not adversely affect the natural or cultural resources, including groundwater resources or habitat, of those federal and state lands. **2-year bill**
- **AB 1523 (Oberholte): San Bernardino County Transportation Authority: Design-Build – Support:** authorizes the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA) to use design-build contracting on one project in the City of San Bernardino. **Chaptered**
- **AB 1654 (Rubio): Water Conservation: Support:** would enhance existing reporting and drought response requirements. Urban retail water suppliers would report annually to DWR on the status of their water supplies for that year and whether supplies will be adequate to meet projected customer demand. If supplies are not adequate to meet demand, the water supplier would be required to implement the appropriate responses as described in their water shortage contingency analysis. **2-year bill**
- **AB 1671 (Caballero): Backflow Protection and Cross Connection Controls: Standards – Support:** Requires the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) to, on or before January 1, 2020, adopt standards for backflow protection and cross-connection control. **Chaptered**
- **SB 1 (Beall): Transportation Funding – Support:** Increases several taxes and fees to raise the equivalent of roughly \$52.4 billion over ten years in new transportation revenues and makes adjustments for inflation every year; directs the funding to be used towards deferred maintenance on the state highways and local streets and roads, and to improve the state's trade corridors, transit, and active transportation facilities. **Chaptered**
- **SB 3 (Beall): Veterans and Affordable Housing Bond Act of 2018 – Support:** enacts the Veterans and Affordable Housing Bond Act of 2018 and authorizes the issuance of \$4 billion in general obligation (GO) bonds for affordable housing programs and a veteran's home ownership program, subject to approval by the voters in the November 6, 2018 election. **Chaptered**
- **SB 373 (Cannella) Public contracts: design-build: Stanislaus Regional Water Authority – Support:** allows the Stanislaus Regional Water Authority to utilize design-build to construct a surface water supply project. **Chaptered**
- **SB 436 (Allen): Teachers: California STEM Professional Teaching Pathway Act of 2017 – Support:** establishes the California STEM Professional Teaching Pathway to recruit, train, support, and retain qualified science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professionals, including military veterans, as mathematics and science teachers in California. **2-year bill**
- **SB 623 (Monning) Water quality: Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund. Oppose:** creates the Safe and Affordable Drinking

Water Fund, administered by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), and imposes water, fertilizer and dairy fees to fund safe drinking water programs. **2-year bill**

• **SB 793 (Hill) Competitive bidding: design-build and best value construction contracting. Support:** allows specified special districts to use design-build contracting for construction of buildings or other facilities in those districts, and expands a pilot program that allows seven counties to use best value contracting for specified projects until January 1, 2020. **Chaptered**

### Recent Reports

**Environmental Research Letters** released Availability of High-Magnitude Streamflow for Groundwater Banking in the Central Valley, California. "California's climate is characterized by the largest precipitation and streamflow variability observed within the coterminous U.S. This, combined with chronic groundwater overdraft ... creates the need to identify additional surface water sources available for groundwater recharge using methods such as agricultural groundwater banking, aquifer storage and recovery, and spreading basins.... [W]e present a comprehensive analysis of the magnitude, frequency, duration and timing of high-magnitude streamflow (HMF) for 93 stream gauges covering the Sacramento, San Joaquin and Tulare basins in California.... The results suggest that there is sufficient unmanaged surface water physically available to mitigate long-term groundwater overdraft in the Central Valley."

They also published Dry Groundwater Wells in the Western United States. "During California's severe five-year drought groundwater levels fell to record lows and people in farming communities from Tulare County to Paso Robles saw their wells go dry. Now researchers have analyzed records for about 2 million wells across 17 western states from Texas to Oregon, and they estimate that one out of every 30 wells was dry between 2013 and 2015. The researchers also found dry wells were concentrated in farming areas such as California's Central Valley and the High Plains. In some areas, they estimated that up to one-fifth of wells were dry.... [T]he study confirmed that domestic wells are shallower and more susceptible to going dry than agricultural wells in parts of the Central Valley, though not all of it. Outside of California ... the depths of household wells and agricultural wells were similar in most of the areas they analyzed." (Desert Sun, Sep. 29, 2017)

**UC Davis** published Disruptive Transportation: The Adoption, Utilization, and Impacts of Ride-Hailing in the United States. "Ride-hailing services have exploded in popularity around the world in a relatively short period of time, and initial evidence suggests that they capture a relatively significant share of how people travel in major cities. Looking forward towards a future with automated vehicle technology – which is estimated to accelerate adoption of these services, it is critical that transportation planners and policymakers begin to understand how "mobility as a service" models shape travel patterns." The key takeaways from the study include finding a higher use of the services among the wealthy and a higher use in urban

areas. A significant finding was that the majority of trips would have been made via walking, biking, public transit, or simply avoided.

The **CA State Auditor's** office has released its report, "Dept. of Water Resources: The Unexpected Complexity of California WaterFix Has Resulted in Significant Cost Increases and Delays," finds "the planning phase" of WaterFix "experienced significant cost increases and schedule delays because of the scale and unexpected complexity of the project," noting "as of June 2017, the planning costs had reached \$280 million;" also finds DWR did not follow contractor bidding requirements when it replaced the program manager for the conservation and conveyance program," selecting the Hallmark Group, whose contract "has tripled from \$4.1 million to \$13.8 million; also finds DWR "has not completed either an economic or financial analysis to demonstrate the financial viability of WaterFix."

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# ASCE LA YMF and ASCE UCLA Student Mixer Event



by Ibrahim Ibrahim



On Saturday, October 21, 2017, the ASCE Los Angeles Younger Member Forum (LA YMF) and the University of California-Los Angeles ASCE student chapter (ASCE UCLA) organized the annual LA student mixer event. Invitations were extended to all ASCE LA Section professionals and the eleven university ASCE student chapters within the Section. The goal of the event was to present the benefits of ASCE membership to student chapters. The event included presentations by ASCE LA Section leaders, personal skills' workshops, hands-on civil engineering activities, and a strategic planning and a brainstorming session.

The event was hosted at UCLA's Pauley Pavilion, and commenced around 9:00 AM with a welcome presentation by LA YMF's President: Ruwanka Purasinghe and LA YMF University Outreach Chair: Ben Baker. An Ice breaker by ASCE UCLA followed the welcome session.

At approximately 9:45AM, the LA Section President: Jerry Burke, presented the benefits of ASCE throughout the civil engineering professional career. Elizabeth Ruedas (Orange County Branch President-Elect) followed with a presentation on communication styles and personal vision. Her presentation included sessions of verbal surveys and participations. UCLA's recent graduate Paul Lee (LA YMF Popsicle Bridge Competition Chair) presented on Civil Engineering and Sustainability. His presentation included a hands on activity where students had to brainstorm ideas for more green energy solutions for a new city's infrastructure. Finally and while eating lunch, a presentation about LA YMF's structure, annual activities', and upcoming events was presented by Ben Baker.

Overall the event was a great success, and achieved its' goal. A special thanks to LA YMF and ASCE UCLA for organizing this great event.









# Region 9 History & Heritage Committee Update



by Chuck Spinks, P.E., M. ASCE, Chair, Region 9 History & Heritage Committee



In 2019 the nation will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. The construction of the Transcontinental Railroad was the most significant project in the world in the 19th century. It was like going to the moon in the 20th century: few thought it was possible with the technology of the time. It involved constructing 2,000 miles of railroad over two major mountain ranges, the Rocky Mountains, and the even more difficult

Sierra Nevada. Both crossings were at a higher elevation than any railroad in the world up to that time.

This event is especially significant to California for the following reasons:

- The Central Pacific Railroad of California was incorporated on June 26, 1861 in Sacramento, more than a year before the Union Pacific railroad was formed in the East.
- The single person most responsible for getting the Pacific Railroad Act of 1862 passed by Congress was a Civil Engineer in California, Theodore Judah, a member of ASCE.
- Construction of the Central Pacific Railroad started on January 23, 1863 in Sacramento, over 2 and ½ years before the first rail was laid by the Union Pacific.
- By far the most difficult and challenging part of the route for the Civil Engineers and the construction workers was crossing the Sierra Nevada.
- The construction of the Central Pacific required the effort of thousands of Chinese immigrants that made up 90% of the work force, with many of their descendants currently living in California.

The ASCE Region 9 and the Society History & Heritage Committees have started planning activities for the celebrations in 2019. The major ASCE activity will be a Railroad History Symposium in Sacramento in May of 2019. It will include speakers on topics of Railroad History, concentrating on the Transcontinental Railroad and the railroad technology of the time. Tours and field trips will be conducted before or after the Symposium. Look for announcements from ASCE coming out in early 2018.

The Region 9 History & Heritage Committee is also looking for new Historic Civil Engineering Landmarks to designate, either with a regional award or with a national award. It would be great to have one or more Historic Civil Engineering Landmark awards for the historic year 2019. The Criteria for the National award are:

- The nominated project must represent a significant facet of civil engineering history, and must have contributed to the development of the nation or a very large region.
- The nominated project needs to be at least 50 years old.
- A local Section and Region must officially nominate the project.
- A detailed submittal to include the Historic Civil Engineering Landmark Form must be submitted to the National History and Heritage Committee for approval
- If approved, ASCE will supply the 13" X 19" bronze plaque.
- The Section will organize a Dedication Ceremony to be attended by the Society President or their delegate.

The criteria for the Local or Regional award are less stringent, but similar. The Region 9 History & Heritage Committee will assist and support local efforts in preparing the Award applications. If you have any questions or ideas for awards, please contact me at [chuck.spinks@outlook.com](mailto:spinks@outlook.com), or the committee Vice Chair, Andy Machen at [andrewmachen@rivsan.com](mailto:andrewmachen@rivsan.com).



The Theodore Judah Monument cornerstone being dedicated on April 25, 1930 by ASCE President John F. Coleman during ASCE's National Convention in Sacramento.

## ARTICLE



The Industry Leaders Council engages senior leaders from industry, academia, government, and non-governmental organizations to identify tactical actions for ASCE and the civil engineering profession.

Membership on the ILC is by invitation only. Council members commit to a two (2) year term of service. Potential candidates are nominated by their peers and those candidates selected to join the ILC receive an invitation from the ILC Chair and ASCE Executive Director.

Interested in learning more about the ILC? The ILC is always looking for dedicated, active, and dynamic leaders to join them in their work for the industry. Please contact Carol Vargas ([cvargas@asce.org](mailto:cvargas@asce.org)), Director of Industry Relations for information.



# ASCE Strategic Plan Update – December 2017



by Kwame A. Agyare, P.E., ENV SP, M. ASCE, ASCE Region 9 (California) Director



ASCE is nearing the completion of a two-year long process that will result in a major update to the Society's Strategic Plan. In my November newsletter article I had noted that the Society's top three strategic initiatives for the past several years have essentially been: (1) Sustainable Infrastructure – where members are dedicated to ensuring a sustainable future in which human society has the capacity and opportunity to maintain and improve its quality of life

indefinitely, without degrading the quantity, quality, or the availability of natural, economic and social resources; (2) The ASCE Grand Challenge – established to reduce the life cycle cost of infrastructure by 50% by 2025 and to foster the optimization of infrastructure investments for society, and; (3) Raise the Bar – seeking to advance the profession and the public welfare by actively supporting the national movement to raise educational requirements for licensure of future professional engineers. The new ASCE Strategic Plan will encompass new goals to chart our Society's future.

The Vision for the Society will remain "Civil Engineers are global leaders building a better quality of life".

The Mission for the Society was modified by the Board of Direction in March of this year, from "Provide essential value to our members and partners, advance civil engineering, and serve the public good" to an updated version which states "Deliver value to our members, advance civil engineering, and protect the public health, safety, and welfare."

Six new goals have been developed for the Society going forward. The new goals will be accompanied by several Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure that the goals are substantially achieved in the coming years.

The new goals are:

1. Civil engineers develop and apply innovative, state-of-the-art practices and technologies
2. All infrastructure is safe, efficient, and sustainable
3. ASCE advances the educational and professional standards for civil engineers
4. The public values civil engineer's essential role in society
5. An ever-growing number of civil engineers are members of, and engage in, ASCE
6. ASCE excels in strategic and operational effectiveness

Strategies necessary to achieve these goals are currently in development. A final decision on the strategies and the entire strategic plan is scheduled for the March 16-17, 2018 Society Board meeting in Arlington, VA. Several ASCE leaders are currently involved in the process. These include Section & Branch Presidents or committee chairs who oversee a committee; the Board of Directors; and some constituent committees of ASCE. These entities have been tasked to gather input from fellow officers, local board members and committee members towards the plan. Region 9 members can contact their local leaders to provide input towards this effort. Written comments on the new Goals are to be submitted electronically to ASCE at [stakeholder@asce.org](mailto:stakeholder@asce.org) no later than December 14, 2017.



For any information regarding ASCE Region 9 activities, please contact me at [agyare.kwame@gmail.com](mailto:agyare.kwame@gmail.com) or you may visit the ASCE Region 9 website at <http://regions.asce.org/region9>



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ASCE LA Section  
Gayle Stewart  
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Fax (714) 784-7806  
E-mail: [gstewart@gsecorp.org](mailto:gstewart@gsecorp.org)

### *Editor*

Dr. Cris B. Liban, P.E.  
LACMTA  
One Gateway Plaza  
Mail Stop 99-16-9  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Phone (213) 922-2471  
FAX (213) 922-6875  
E-mail: [cliban@alumni.ucla.edu](mailto:cliban@alumni.ucla.edu)  
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