

Dec. '11

Happy Holidays to All!!!

Los Angeles Section

Monthly: Est. 1913

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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



Over the past couple of months, I have noticed a rash of high-profile stories on infrastructure in the media. Are ASCE's messages beginning to have the intended effect of raising the public's awareness of the condition of our infrastructure, or is this just coincidence? Either way, I am glad to see these items get the publicity they deserve. Here are some of the stories I saw, along with some personal commentary on each.

Freeway News: The lead front-page story in the O.C. Register on Sunday, November 6, 2011, was on the long-overdue widening of the I-5 freeway between the 605 Freeway and the O.C./L.A. County line. Work is underway on a \$1 billion expansion of this 7-mile stretch of freeway that has not seen major improvements since it was built in the mid-1950s. Completion is expected in 2016. The project has been made possible by funding provided by L.A. County's half-cent sales tax, approved as Measure R. **Comment:** *Hooray! I have frequently traveled this route during my working career and have long groused over the failure of L.A. County authorities to widen this bottleneck. Wouldn't you know that this work will be wrapping up about the time I expect to call it a career. Better late than never—I am glad to see this finally happening.*

Rail News: The California High-Speed Rail Authority unveiled a new business plan in November for the Southern California-to-Bay Area bullet train. The system is now expected to cost \$98.5 billion to build over the next 22 years. This is nearly double the previous cost projection and a 13-year extension of the completion date. The higher costs resulted in part from the longer schedule and a higher estimate of future inflation. **Comment:** *Will this be a lethal blow to the project? The engineer in me hopes not—I would love to see the project built. But will we be able to afford it, and where will the money come from? And, 13 more years? Who knows what technological advances in other types of travel will be made during that time. Good luck to the Authority and all who are involved—I hope you can pull this off.*

Airport News: Speaking of modes of travel, work continues on the multi-billion dollar modernization of LAX. Meanwhile, the new \$543 million Terminal C at John Wayne Airport (JWA) opened to the public on November 14. The terminal project also added six new gates, three baggage carousels, and a new parking structure as Orange County prepares for the future. Trivia time—which is the top city served by JWA, by number of passengers flying annually? (Answer below). Meanwhile, a drastic fall-off of passenger volume and domestic flights has occurred at Ontario International Airport. The airport has experienced a 36% reduction in passenger volume and a 47% decrease in domestic departures since August 2007. In a front-page article on October 31, 2011, the L.A. Times discussed how Inland Empire leaders are pushing to gain control of the airport away from Los Angeles World Airports, whom they accuse of neglecting Ontario in favor of LAX. Ontario has the potential to accommodate 30 million passengers annually. Its current traffic is less than half that. **Comment:** *While LAX is playing some catch-up, it seems to me that these three major LA Basin airports are or will be positioned to accommodate future growth in air travel. For the time being, this makes one component of infrastructure where supply is ahead of demand.*

continued on page 3

VOL. XLXI NO. 12

In This Issue	page
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	1
EDITORIAL	2
THIS MONTH IN SACRAMENTO.....	2
ANNOUNCEMENT.....	5
DISTINGUISHED MEMBER ELECTED	6
PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY.....	8-9



What Will You Do?

The year has brought us a lot of blessings. We again have a lot to be thankful for. As we move into the holiday season, we must remember the fact that we have chosen to make a difference. We build a better life for everyone. We are civil engineers.

I do not know if you realize the magnitude of such responsibility and the consequences of inaction. You and I have a lot of weight on our shoulders. People actually respect and look up to our contributions to society. But such is the challenge. How do we actually effect significant change—humbly, but with conviction—that we convince others that we are really worth the respect we seek?

Civil engineers are some of the most admired professionals on this planet. But does it really matter if civil engineers, unlike celebrities, do not get recognized for their efforts and for their achievements? I know this feeling very well, for I believe my team (in my regular job) has done some of the most significant things that others can only dream of participating in. But we remain in the background, silently toiling, making a difference. I always tell my staff that we do not seek recognition for our achievements, we just do the work.

But assume for a moment that we do indeed get widely recognized for our work. What would happen then? I somewhat know that feeling as well, for there are small but significant achievements we have made in the past few years that have gained the attention of people who need to know. That, my friends, creates and effects more change. For in those small things that were recognized and given some importance, our subtle messages are finally heard. In those moments of greatness, people actually realize that we can provide ideas that can affect millions of people. The goal is not self-gratification or self-promotion, but for someone to finally notice and beget success with success.

The phenomenon I allude to is endorsement. Not necessarily by some celebrity, but by normal people who truly believe in a cause and work hard to make others know of that cause and the effects of that cause. With an abundance of social media, we create a network of individuals who talk about and live the messages we promote. People who talk about those achievements promote and endorse more of the same kind of work; and with that, the possibility of diverting scarce resources to further the goals of that work.

As civil engineers, we have the power to do so. Yes a lot of us work in our small niches, and are satisfied with the contributions we make to a portion of a project. But a lot of us also dream big. Regardless of your perspective, collectively, we should dream big. Let people talk about our achievements and let those discussions become a tool for us to build a better world—and more importantly, a better future—for all of us.

May this holiday season provide you with some time to reflect about your career, your environment, and the things that we can do together. Reflect on your achievements as well as the lessons from your failures (and what others have learned from them).

We are coming to another turning point with the commencement of a new year. How will you make a difference?

Enjoy this issue of your newsletter. Happy holidays to all of us!!!

—Dr. Cris B. Liban, P.E.

This Month in Sacramento (ASCE)

By Richard Markuson, Pacific Advisory Group

Governor Jerry Brown has “disposed” of the bills passed by the Legislature, signing the vast majority of them. Despite some of his early statements about the relative merit of the bills being sent to him, he is signing the vast majority of measures—over 90% so far.

Vetoed

Brown vetoed **AB 1210** (Garrick) that would have exempted Civil Engineers from the requirements imposed by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) for certification as a QSD or QSP. Region 9 joined the supporters of the bill to argue that the qualifications to practice engineering should be established by the Engineers’ Board and that the SWRCB and other regulatory bodies should not set standards and enforce additional requirements on what are fundamentals of the practice of civil engineering. In his veto message Brown explained;

“I am returning Assembly Bill 1210 without my signature. This bill would exempt licensed civil engineers from training requirements related to the preparation of Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans. Many of these storm plans are found to be deficient and those preparing them need a much better understanding of the necessary elements of a solid plan. It is not feasible to inspect every plan or every construction site but it is essential to have some process in place to ensure compliance in preparing complete and sound storm water plans. The current process depends on a training education program for all professionals who prepare storm plans—engineers, geologists, hydrologists, and landscape architects. This bill, a piecemeal approach, exempts only one profession, the civil engineers. A more comprehensive solution would be better. I am directing the State Water Board to review the entire program and evaluate compliance alternatives that are more efficient and workable for all professionals.”

From the wording of the message, it would appear the SWRCB had a role in the veto.

Suffering the same fate was **AB 275** (Solorio) that would allow the installation of rainwater capture systems (RCS) to store rainwater that has not yet collected urban pollutants for non-potable purposes. Brown noted, “I am returning Assembly Bill 275 without my signature. This measure seeks to adopt an interim standard for rainwater capture outside the established Building Standards Commission process. Without some urgency or a more compelling reason, I think it is better to stick with the process and follow existing California law.” This veto was slightly more convoluted. At the behest of the plumbers union, AB 275 became a tug-of-war between two competing code development organizations—the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) and the International Code Council (ICC). AB 275 would have required that the work on RCS comply with the requirements contained in the 2010 Green Plumbing and Mechanical Code Supplement (GPMCS), published by IAPMO unless the California Building Standards Commission (BSC) adopts superseding building standards. ICC objected to this and with the plumbers union—persuaded Brown to veto the bill.

continued on page 4

Water News: Ongoing litigation threatens the 2003 water pact between the Imperial Valley and San Diego County. You may recall that the pact allows the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) to transfer some of its share of Colorado River water to the San Diego County Water Authority via the Colorado Aqueduct. To say that the two agencies have become dependent upon each other is an understatement. Today, a third of IID's water operations budget comes from payments made by San Diego. More than a third of the water distributed by San Diego to local agencies comes from this agreement and two related agreements. Opponents of the water pact contend that the reduction in agricultural runoff as a result of the water sales to San Diego will cause the Salton Sea to shrink, thus creating an environmental disaster. The litigation is largely centered on whether the state should be allowed to help fund the multi-billion-dollar restoration of the sea and/or if it has the financial wherewithal to do so. What happens if the courts strike down the pact is unclear. Does Southern California turn to Northern California to pick up the slack? That could bring on the mother of all water wars. **Comment:** The irony to me in all this is the fact that the current Salton Sea has only been in existence since 1905. That year, heavy flows on the Colorado River breached canal head gates and then overtopped canal dikes, flowing toward the sub-sea-level sump in Imperial County known as the Salton Sink. At times over a two-year period, the entire volume of the Colorado River would flow into the Salton Sink. By the time the river was finally controlled, the largest lake in California had been re-created. I say re-created, because over the past hundreds of thousands of years, the Salton Sink has alternately been a lake and a dry desert basin, depending on river flows and evaporation. Did anyone sue anyone in previous millennia when the sea would naturally dry up?

World Population News: The United Nations announced that Monday, October 31, 2011, was the date of the arrival of the globe's 7 billionth occupant. The UN estimates we'll hit 8 billion by 2025 and 10 billion by 2083. News of this milestone rekindled fears of how the resources of the planet will cope with the

needs of so many people. **Comment:** This is why the world needs and depends on Civil Engineers and why I contend that ours is not only a very noble profession, but also a very secure one. Other professions come and go, but Civil Engineering is here for the long haul! This story, together with the preceding story on the water pact, reminds us how important it has become for engineers, indeed all of society, to blend the needs of the human population with the interests of our world's environment.

Merger News: Within a span of several days in early October announcements were made that two venerable California-based civil-engineering firms were being acquired. First, RBF Consulting revealed that it had been acquired by Michael Baker Associates, followed by news of the acquisition of Winzler & Kelly by GHD. **Comment:** Like many, I was shocked when I initially heard this news. However, since then, the more I learned about the deals, the more understandable they became. Now the real work begins as they move into the all-important integration phase. I wish them the best of luck in this effort.

Holiday News: As we usher in the twelfth and final month of 2011, the newspapers advertisers make it abundantly clear that the holiday season is upon us. **Comment:** Civil engineering is now a very diverse profession. ASCE members represent both genders and many different nationalities, races, and religious beliefs. Whichever holiday it is that you observe, I offer my best wishes to all my fellow ASCE members, their families and loved ones for a wondrous holiday and a safe, healthy, prosperous, and Happy New Year.

Trivia Answer: Phoenix



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Brown also vetoed Region 9-supported SB 263 (Pavley) that would have required the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to make well logs available, with certain restrictions, to governmental agencies for studies, college-level or higher academics for research, geologists, geophysicists, hydrologists, civil engineers, licensed well contractors or any person who obtains written authorization from the well owner. Brown said, "I am returning SB 263 without my signature. The original intent of this bill recognized that wise management and use of ground-water supply requires public disclosure of well logs. Unfortunately, as amended, this bill now unduly restricts the use of these reports and imposes severe criminal penalties for disclosure. California is the only western state that does not provide ready access to well reports. That should be changed. I am directing the Department of Water Resources to work with the author to ensure responsible public access to well logs."

New Reports

The High Speed Rail Authority has released its updated business plan, found at http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/business_plan_reports.aspx

The State's Delta Watermaster released a new study, "Report on State-ments of Water Diversions and Use: Providing a Better Picture of Water Use in the Delta."

US Geological Survey reports that one of its studies was recently published in the journal "PLoS ONE" in an article titled "Projected Evolution of California's San Francisco Bay-Delta-River System in a Century of Climate Change." The study says the Bay-Delta system may experience longer dry seasons, diminishing snow packs, earlier snow melt, etc.

Environment CA has released its study, The Way Forward on Global Warming: Reducing Carbon Pollution Today and Restoring Momentum for Tomorrow by Promoting Clean Energy, which highlights the idea that local governments, with no help from Congress, can cut carbon pollution nationally by 20% by 2020.

The Legislative Analyst's Office has released two reports: "Alternative Energy Manufacturing Sales and Use Tax Exclusions (SB 71) Program" was presented to Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee; and "Potential Funding Alternatives for the Bay Delta Conservation Planning Process" was presented to Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee.

Environment California released "National Solar Jobs Census 2011: A Review of the US Solar Workforce," which finds that California leads the nation in "solar-related jobs" with 25,000 out of "more than 100,000" nationwide.

The Milken Institute has released "What Brain Drain? California Among the Best in U.S. at Retaining Skilled Workers," which says over the past decade, "about 65% of skilled CA natives were living and working in the state, far above the national average of about 50%."

Controller John Chiang has released the financial statement and summary analysis on the state's cash flow for September; he finds revenues "\$301.6 million below projections" from the recently passed state budget, and also finds year-to-date general fund revenues "behind the budget's estimates by \$705.5 million."

CA Budget Project has released its report, "Should California Extend Sales Tax to Services?", which outlines potential benefits and drawbacks of an expansion.

The Sierra Club has distributed a report, "Saving Money at the Gas Pump: State-by-State Consumer Savings from Stronger Fuel Efficiency and Carbon Pollution Standards," produced by the Union of Concerned Scientists and the Natural Resources Defense Council. It says the Obama Administration's proposed fuel-efficiency and carbon pollution standards will "save Californians, in just 14 years, \$4.95 billion" and cut the state's oil use "by 2.67 billion gallons."

Treasurer Bill Lockyer has released the 2011 Debt Affordability Report, The Challenge Ahead: Balancing California's Infrastructure Investments and Service Needs, which recommends better infrastructure planning and less reliance on the general fund to finance public works projects.

ASCE Key Contacts

The California Legislature introduces more than 2,500 bills every year, and many of them can directly or indirectly affect your practice of engineering. If you want to be more involved in representing your profession and ASCE, take the first step and become a key contact. ASCE's Key Contact program will notify you of important legislation, both here in California and in Washington D.C., and give you an easy way to make your position known to your elected officials. Join today!

For more information on ASCE's legislative program contact Richard Markuson. For information on transportation measures, contact Kenneth Rosenfield, and for water bills, Mark Norton.

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**Announces the Sixth Annual
California Infrastructure Symposium
Awards Dinner
Legislative Day**

SAVE THE DATE
February 28 and 29, 2012

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) realizes that critical infrastructure systems are facilities and assets so vital that their destruction or incapacitation would disrupt the security, economy, safety, health, or welfare of the public. One of ASCE's top priorities is to raise the grades on California's infrastructure.

ASCE Region 9 is taking the lead by presenting the **Sixth Annual California Infrastructure Symposium** to be held on **Tuesday, February 28, 2012**, in Sacramento. The Infrastructure Symposium will address such topics as roads and highways, bridges, high speed rail, water supply, and flood control. The speakers are invited to give you the most current information on Federal and State priorities, alternate modes of funding, the stimulus plan, gas tax restructuring, and more. There will also be discussion of National and Statewide Report Cards which will identify and bring attention for infrastructure support and renewal in California.

Following the Infrastructure Symposium, you may also register for an evening to help celebrate excellence in California Civil Engineering projects and honor the outstanding accomplishments of individuals at the **ASCE Region 9 Awards Dinner**.

Please mark your calendar to join us on **Tuesday, February 28, 2012**, at the Hyatt Regency Sacramento at Capitol Park, 1209 L Street, Sacramento, California for continuing education, networking, and social events you will not want to miss. Look for more information as it becomes available at www.asce.org/region9.

Also, please note that **ASCE Region 9 Legislative Day** will take place on **Wednesday, February 29, 2012** at the California State Capitol in Sacramento.

For additional information, please contact Lori Campbell, Administrator,
lkconsulting@sbcglobal.net, or by telephone at 916.965.1536.



ASCE Region 9 represents more than 18,000 ASCE members in the State of California.

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Section Member Elected Distinguished Member

The American Society of Civil Engineers recently recognized the accomplishments of Robert D. Nichol, P.E., Dist.M.ASCE, a Los Angeles Section member, by electing him a Distinguished Member, Class of 2011. He is also a member of the Metropolitan Los Angeles Branch.

Since 1975, when Robert D. Nichol, P.E., Dist.M.ASCE became only the second president of Moffatt & Nichol, the firm has experienced unprecedented growth while at the same time preserving the family culture its founders had conscientiously established and nourished. His vision and leadership expanded the company from a small southern California firm (one office and 50 employees) into a national force. Today, the firm is a global force with 26 offices and more than 500 employees. ASCE recognized Mr. Nichol's achievements with the 2010 Outstanding Projects and Leaders (OPAL) leadership award for management.

Under Mr. Nichol's guidance, the firm has been a key innovator in the planning and design of modern port infrastructure. As a result, the firm is today irrevocably linked to this important industry as it supports the movement of goods and services that maintain the economic engine of this and other countries. This market dominance is acknowledged by competitors and clients alike, and today, many of the world's largest ports and port operating companies look to Moffatt & Nichol for guidance in their need for growth.

The firm's contributions are not limited to planning and engineering disciplines. Under Mr. Nichol's direction, the firm has also grown to become one of the nation's largest coastal engineering firms, supporting the environmental and navigational needs of the port industry with design in areas as diverse as dredging and habitat restoration. In addition, the firm was among the first to offer in-house economics and



Photo by David Hathcox/ASCE

Robert D. Nichol, P.E.

freight forecasting services, which have attracted some of the world's largest lending institutions as clients.

Mr. Nichol's lifelong commitment to excellence is clearly seen in his long list of award-winning projects. Jobs completed by the firm under Mr. Nichol's guidance span more than 40 years, and include port planning and infrastructure projects in virtually every major port in the United States. Today, Mr. Nichol adheres to the examples of the founders that the firm shall provide its clients with "good engineers, honest engineers, and resourceful engineers." He has been responsible for innovative breakthroughs in major waterfront and transportation projects by coupling engineering and construction know-how with innovative concepts to create state-of-the-art, practical solutions for clients.

Mr. Nichol has personally dedicated himself to active membership in many professional organizations, both nationally and locally. He has served as the U.S. Commissioner for the Permanent International Association of Navigation Congress (PIANC). For the National Research Council he was appointed to the Commission on Engineering and Technical Systems. He is a Fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers and was recently appointed to the Senior Executive Group of the Society of American Military Engineers.

Distinguished Membership is the highest award the Society may confer, second only to the title of ASCE President. Members or Fellows elected to this prestigious and highly selective list have attained acknowledged eminence in a branch of engineering or its related arts and sciences. To learn how you can nominate an outstanding professional for Distinguished Membership, please visit <http://www.asce.org/awards> or contact awards@asce.org.

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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.



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS
International Committee, Los Angeles Section

The 7th International Engineering
and Construction Conference
(IECC'7)

scheduled for February 13–15, 2012

to be held at the University of South Queensland, Australia
has been postponed until the year 2013.

**THE NEW DATE AND VENUE
WILL BE ANNOUNCED
ON THE CONFERENCE WEBSITE:
www.a-tech.hk/IECC7/index.html**

Contact Dr. C.T. Bathala, Chair,
ASCE Los Angeles Section International Committee,
at ctbathala@hotmail.com if you need additional information.

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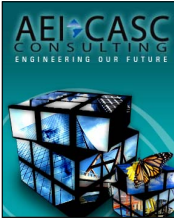


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