

Los Angeles Section

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Mark Norton, P.E.
Section President



Raising The Bar

As a civil engineer we live in changing and far reaching times with even greater challenges in front of us. To meet these challenges, we as civil engineers must become better prepared and better educated. What once was the standard for a civil engineering education, a four year baccalaureate degree, is now considered simply inadequate to deal with the exploding body of science and engineering. To meet these increased demands, ASCE has just released its second edition of the "Body of Knowledge" which is a description of levels of achievement that are required to enter the practice of civil engineering at the professional level. It is recognized that a civil engineering degree is usually the first step to enter the civil engineering career. However, to deal with the increasing complexity of civil engineering work, ASCE has established a policy that encourages achievement with an appropriate "body of knowledge" to work as a civil engineering professional. As civil engineers we should pursue a baccalaureate degree in civil engineering; a master's degree or approximately 30 coordinated graduate level or upper level undergraduate credits and appropriate experience based upon broad technical and professional practice guidelines that provide sufficient flexibility for a wide range of roles in engineering practice. In essence, we as civil engineers must "raise the bar" of what defines a civil engineer.

The theme of "raising the bar" has become a necessity if we are to reach the "Vision for Civil Engineering in 2025" which ASCE released a few months ago and I discussed in my president's message last month. Our association asks each of us to consider at whatever stage in our career we are in, that we are doing all that we can. If we are students, are we actively participating in campus organizations, exploring international programs, seeking relevant work experience and becoming involved in ASCE student chapters? As engineering interns, are we taking charge of our careers, continuing our education, pursuing licensure, developing skills in collaboration and communication and volunteering our time and expertise to our communities through YMF or on our own? As practicing engineers, have we read the ASCE "Body of Knowledge" and "Vision for Civil Engineering in 2025", established professional development programs within our organizations, encouraged and supported continuous learning, supported licensure, served as a mentor to others, involved ourselves in our communities and professional societies, and ensured that we are living up to the highest ethical standards?

As a young engineer out of a civil engineering school, I was fortunate to have multiple mentors who emphasized the importance of continued learning by signing up with me to take video correspondence, master's college level, civil engineering courses to fine tune our civil engineering skills, who encouraged me to attend ASCE luncheons, and supported my efforts to become a registered civil engineer. Even with this mentorship, I realized there were gaps in my skill set. After five years in the working world, I elected to return to college full time to pursue a master's degree in public administration. This decision, though difficult at the time and not necessarily recommended as the most cost effective approach, was for me a turning point in improving my overall understanding of political, legal and public institutions, fine tuning my written and oral communication skills and grasping skills in statistics, finance, and budgeting.

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Reminder:

Copy deadline for the Dec. 2007 issue is Nov. 1, 2007; copy deadline for Jan. 2008 issue is Dec. 1, 2007.



EDITORIAL

Call to Action

The air begins to cool. The holidays are almost here. But we have lots of work to do in the Section. Complacency deserves no place in the Los Angeles Section.

In his second President's Message, Section President Mark Norton elaborates on his previous thoughts about where our profession should lead us. The current message is consistent with reality that I have personally seen in the workplace: the Master's degree is the new Bachelor's and experience is now more essential than anytime else in our career's history. Raising the bar of expectations is a challenge that not only our young engineers need to face. All of us, in whatever phase of our career, need to reexamine ourselves on how we could contribute more not only in our careers, not only in our workplace, but most importantly to society. How appropriate is the tagline on my license plate holder: "Civil Engineers, Building a Better World".

We highlight this month the call for Disaster Relief Training offered through our own Disaster Preparedness Committee. How great of a contribution can it be to use our engineering talents to assist in disaster relief evaluation anywhere in disaster hits. About 40 of those trained through this program have responded to the disaster that followed Hurricane Katrina. Our Section has trained 200. Look for Los Angeles Section Past President Rich Haller's article and our announcement in this newsletter for more information on this matter.

Finally, we introduce in this issue our new Business Manager, Lorena Arce. She has agreed to take over and begin her duties starting with this month's issue. Advertisers can send in their advertisements to Lorena using a pdf, jpg, or eps formats at lorena_arce@yahoo.com. She can be reached by phone at (310) 486-2399. Lorena brings with her the dynamism of the YMF and the maturity of our regular membership in her new role as Newsletter Business Manager. Russ Ryan, our former Business Manager, has taken a very important position in our Los Angeles Section Board as Vice President for Student Activities. Wish both Lorena and Russ luck in their new positions.

Enjoy this issue of the 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.

Earthquake!!

Rich Haller, P.E., M. ASCE
Section Past-President

The thought of it should make you shake! We are all aware of the consequences of a major earthquake in California, but are we truly prepared? As civil engineers are we prepared to support the citizens of our state and are aware of how to assist? The CA Office of Emergency Services (OES) has a program called the Safety Assessment Program (SAP). Per information posted on their website www.oes.ca.gov the SAP provides volunteer professional engineers, architects, and certified building inspectors to assist local governments in safety evaluation of facilities (buildings, infrastructure) in the aftermath of a disaster. As a professional civil, geotechnical, or structural engineer you can join the program by completing a half-day training event. I've recently completed this enjoyable course and am now a proud holder of a SAP Evaluator card. I'm ready to volunteer for up to 5 days in response to a disaster anywhere in the state.

I would like to encourage you to enter the program and receive the required half day of training. Unfortunately, less than 200 Section members out of more than 6,000 have signed on. But that can easily change! Mr. Jack Ralston is the Section coordinator for this training; see the latest announcement in this edition of the newsletter or on the Section website www.ascelasection.org.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *continued*

In addition to raising the bar of education, we should take every opportunity to become involved and participate in our professional association, ASCE. Through ASCE we have an indispensable avenue for us to raise the bar of what we can achieve in our profession. Besides the networking opportunities, the leadership abilities, the organizational development skills, and the professional publications still recognized as world standards in civil engineering practice, the involvement in ASCE serves as a voice for action in service to communities, our society and our world. More than anytime in history, civil engineers will play a key role in reversing the unsustainable trends of development and repairing environmental damage of historical practices. Based on new information we are learning now, unless we take action now and speak out for what needs to be done to support infrastructure, to prepare for natural and foreign disasters, and implement standards that represent the very best in energy and environmental design leadership, we may soon find we have passed the point of no return from a quality of life we have grown so accustomed to.

In closing, the following quote from Dr. Roger Payne, Ocean Alliance President seems appropriate to convey what I see is the significance of our professional role:

"This is an opportunity for greatness which has never been offered to any civilization, any generation in any civilization in human history before to act as a generation to do the right thing. If we fail to receive that opportunity, to act on it, then my feeling is that we will become the most vilified generation that has ever lived in human history."

Congested Roads Threaten Our Health, Safety, Welfare, and Economy

Adapted from www.asce.org

The overburdened state of the nation's urban roadways has increased so dramatically in the past 25 years that congestion now poses a significant and immediate threat to public welfare and our economy. The recently released Texas Transportation Institute report told us that Americans are now forced to waste more than 4 billion hours each year sitting in traffic, at an enormous \$78 billion cost to our economy—\$710 per peak traveler—and an immeasurable cost to our way of life. As a nation, we are failing to maintain even our current substandard conditions.

The problem on our roadways is complex, and will require a multifaceted solution. However, while it is true that bold thinking and leadership are part of the solution, that bold thinking and leadership must also extend to making hard decisions when it comes to infrastructure funding. The administration's continued refusal to acknowledge that a gas tax increase must be part of the answer—despite its high-level results and minimal long-term impact on the taxpayers themselves—is at best, disheartening and shortsighted. A ten cents per gallon increase would raise more than \$17 billion a year, while costing the average motorist less than \$10 a month.

The American public needs to tell their elected officials—local, state and federal—that they will no longer tolerate wasting time sitting in traffic instead of spending that time with their families. Time is working against our infrastructure. We must demand decisive, innovative and meaningful action from our elected officials now, or suffer the safety and economic consequences of inaction.

For more information on ASCE's *Report Card for America's Infrastructure and Action Plan for the 110th Congress*, please visit: www.asce.org/reportcard.

DISASTER TRAINING

Classes are being organized for volunteers under the auspices 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. All of our classes have been held at a private firm or governmental office. 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

Chair, Disaster Preparedness Committee, ASCE L.A. Section
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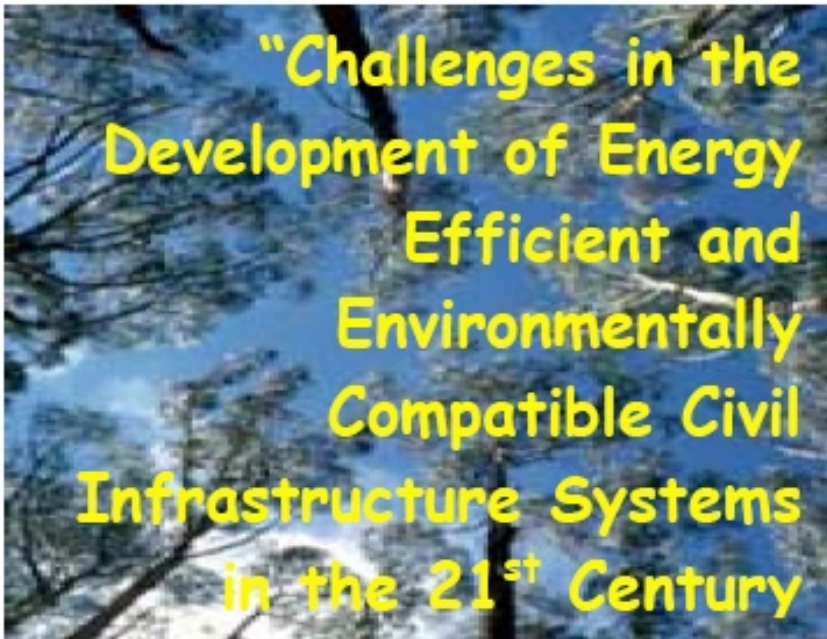
**Infrastructure topics to be featured are:
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Prospective authors are invited to submit abstracts, not exceeding one page, via e-mail to Ayman Mosallam, Conference Chair: Mosallam@uci.edu, on or before November 20, 2007. Abstracts should present original and unpublished advances of knowledge in accordance with the conference theme. Authors will be notified of acceptance or otherwise of their abstracts by December 15, 2007.

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- ◆ Seismic Repair & Retrofit of Structures
- ◆ FRP Composites in Construction
- ◆ Nano Technology in Construction
- ◆ Advances in Geotechnical Engineering
- ◆ Traffic & Transportation Engineering
- ◆ Advances in Environmental Engineering
- ◆ Water & Wastewater Treatment Systems
- ◆ Construction Management

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- ◆ US\$ 500.00 (Full Conference)
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All graphic materials submitted for use in this newsletter should have all fonts outlined, and links included; .eps files preferred. Other formats are: Quark, Adobe Illustrator or Adobe Photoshop; additional acceptable file formats are: .qxd, .eps, and .tif; PDF files are acceptable for proofing only. Images embedded in Microsoft Word documents should be sent separately, at a minimum resolution of 150 dpi at the display size desired. Collected files, including links and fonts, should be compressed and emailed, or sent on zip disk (provide return address). Business cards can be submitted electronically as well, or send clean, crisp, b&w laser print, unfolded.

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