

Montana Society of Engineers

A state society of the National Society of Professional Engineers



Founded 1887

President's Message: News from the Capitol City

Kenneth Phillips, PE, President

It's December and I just received my second renewal notice from NSPE. The first notice was via email earlier in the fall but of course understanding the importance of the time value of money, I hold off until now to renew.

One of the items that has been approved to be on the January MSE Board agenda is that Montana Society of Engineer's will request that we be allowed to collect State & National dues in-house and forward National's portions to them. Now before dropping to any conclusions that we think we are getting ripped off by National, no it's not that. The rationale is that we want to get back to more of a personalized approach instead of mass mailings. When someone hasn't paid their dues we can now get in touch with them and find out what's happening. Is it the fact that they are unhappy with NSPE or MSE or is it a symptom of tough times. Either case we would at least be able to work with the individual on a local level to try and assist in the case of tough times or listen to their concerns if they feel that the organization doesn't offer value.

Also National is in the process of working out an ala carte membership. In that case you can belong to the current three tier system, Chapter, State & National. Or you can join either State only or National only. With the possibility of those options in our future the Board feels that it would be good to have the membership information in real time and not wait until National provides the information.

Our intent is to amend our existing contract with Association Management. Connie is excellent and can help with outreach as well as notify Board members so we can better deal with membership issues. This will add some additional expenses to our budget but the last few years our budget has had been in the black. This is mainly due to the bang up job that Crystal Kuntz does with the Joint Conference which provides us some revenue. So it should not have any negative impacts on fees and we should see a

more personalized down home fee notification. This will be voted on at our January Board meeting and upon approval we will then work with National on the transition. But for this year the membership will still go through national so if you're like me and a last minute due payer go ahead and send your annual dues to National.

On a different note. Montana DEQ is in the process of starting to promote energy performance contracting on state, local government, and school buildings. Energy Performance contracting (EPC) is where a firm completes an energy study and then the government entity can use the energy savings to pay off the cost of the energy upgrade. Typically the EPC then completes a design/ build to implement the measures. If the savings do not materialized then the EPC is supposed to make up the difference so that the facilities utility budget remains neutral. There are 11 firms that have been qualified and all of them from out of State with one so far opening an office in Montana. Where this impacts our engineering community is that to do a performance contract, the firms must first complete a financial grade audit. This audit must be conducted by a Montana Licensed Engineer.

Owners should be wary that the energy savings may have lots of caveats such as assumed occupancy periods and temperature settings. So the involvement of Montana Engineers to properly inform and protect the owner is important. Also EPC's can only use energy savings to finance the project. They cannot use any deferred maintenance or avoided routine maintenance costs so they have tight operating requirements. They are also required to comply with the Montana preference of having at least 50% bona fide Montana workers and pay prevailing wage rates. I being an old traditional design, bid, build person still have some concerns as the most famous EPC was Enron. So if you're a M&E firm and would like more info contact me at work kphillips@mt.gov.

December, 2009

“Energy Performance contracting (EPC) is where a firm completes an energy study and then the government entity can use the energy savings to pay off the cost of the energy upgrade.”

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2009 P.E. Hall of Fame Inductee

Doug Brekke, P.E., Hall of Fame Chair

Willis J. Wetstein, P.E. has served as engineer, manager, and executive for Morrison-Maierle, Inc. since 1957. During 52 years he has held many positions with Morrison-Maierle, including President and Chief Executive Officer.

Mr. Wetstein designed and supervised numerous milestone projects for water supply, wastewater treatment, and storm water systems including: non-discharging wastewater treatment facilities at Glacier National Park lakeside resorts, Montana's largest oxidation ditch wastewater treatment plant at Miles City, Mni Wiconi Rural Water System at Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota and Rural Water Supply and Sanitation in Lesotho, Africa.

Mr. Wetstein earned a Civil Engineering degree from Montana State University in 1957. He was a member of the Carroll College Engineering Advisory Board

and assisted Carroll College with the establishment of a Civil Engineering curriculum in 1996. Mr. Wetstein has been an active member of NSPE, MSE, AWWA and WEA. In 2005, he received the WEA/ AWWA Lifetime Achievement Award for service and leadership.

For his career of service and leadership dedicated to the advancement of water supply and wastewater engineering, the promotion of public health and a quality environment in Montana, western United States and developing countries; Willis J. Wetstein is inducted into the Montana Professional Engineers Hall of Fame.

Plaques honoring the inductees are displayed in Roberts Hall at the Montana State University College of Engineering in Bozeman — it is worth stopping by for a look. A call for nominations for future inductees will be made available in June of 2010.

“Mr. Wetstein has been an active member of NSPE, MSE, AWWA and WEA. In 2005, he received the WEA/ AWWA Lifetime Achievement Award for service and leadership.”

“It is good to remember that our democracy only represents those who make their voices heard.”

Congressional Visits

Stephen T. Smith, P.E., Vice President

I attended the Treated Wood Conference (TWC) annual meeting in Washington, D.C. on November 10 – 12. As a part of the meeting, we made visits to many of our congressional representatives' offices to make our pitch for the cause of treated wood products in particular and the wood industry in general. Diana Hanson (Director of the North American Deck and Railing Association-NADRA) and I comprised the Montana “Delegation” and visited the offices of Senator Baucus and Representative Rehberg and I made a phone pitch to Senator Tester's staff. Unfortunately, Congress was on recess and representatives were back at home, so we visited with the appropriate staff members, Spencer Grey for Baucus, Mary Heller for Rehberg, and Trecia Bickford McEvoy for Tester.

Our message was simply that treated wood is itself an environmental success story, creating wood products that

last decades in severe exposure, utilize home grown and manufactured products, sequester carbon through growth and long life, and efficiently utilize our forest products. We urged that used treated wood (following use) be included in the definition of “biomass” under renewable energy legislation and the Cap and Trade bill or other climate change legislation. We also argued that manufacturers of wood products that will typically last 25 years or more be allowed to claim carbon credits for this longer term carbon storage in the products. I also made my personal pitch for a carbon tax as more efficient than the cap and trade process.

For anyone who has not visited representatives in Washington, this is a great educational experience. It is good to remember that our democracy only represents those who make their voices heard. Let me know if you have any questions — shephentsmith@earthlink.net.

2009 JEC Update

Crystal Kuntz, PE, President Elect, JEC Chair

Well, another year has gone by and with it the passing of another successful JEC. This year's Joint Engineer's Conference saw over 300 registrants and hosted over 60 speakers. The feedback received from the comments indicated that our presentations are continuing to improve and are looking good. Even in a down-economy, our vendor show was a stellar success again this year due in no small part to Connie's professionalism and attention to detail. The vendors like the interaction that they are receiving as a result of our drawing and the vendor reception was very well attended which in turn leads to happy, and returning, vendors. A new addition to this year's schedule included a field trip to the Judith Gap Wind Farm. This presentation received glowing reviews from all those in attendance and we hope to include another field trip in next year's JEC. (p.s. – looking for ideas)

In addition to the field trip, we also opted for a number of other changes in response to comments received from the 2008 JEC. We amended the schedule to have the vendors attend for one full day on Thursday rather than a half-day on Thursday afternoon with a half-day on Friday morning. The comment sheets from the vendors this year indicate that the majority of them actually prefer this one-day set up as it provides them the opportunity to make sales calls on Friday. In addition, the relocation of the society meetings to Friday over the lunch break proved to be a resounding success. Societies reported that they had the best attendance they've had in years for their meetings and folks seemed to enjoy having their Thursday evening open. We also opted this year to add a half-day on Wednesday to the conference. It was anticipated that this aspect of the conference would see fewer attendees – but much to our surprise we had nearly 100 folks registered! It looks like Wednesday may be a permanent addition to our future JEC offering. Other changes included moving the Engineering Honors banquet to Wednesday evening. Doug and Jay did an excellent job pulling this evening together and presenting awards to recognize outstanding

achievement in the Engineering Industry. While we had hoped the move from Friday to Wednesday for this event would increase attendance, we found that on average the same number of folks chose to attend this event as have in the past. We will continue to strive for ways to increase the attendance at this event as it is important to recognize those that have made great contributions to our industry.

In addition to all of the changes in the JEC that result in a dynamic conference, our foundation continues to stabilize as well. The participation of each individual society continues to grow each year and we actually receive volunteers on our comment forms that wish to participate in the JEC planning! Those painfully-early morning planning meetings on the Friday of the JEC are now normally well attended with over 20 representatives from various societies (yea!). We have a well-established set of conference policies and a web site that is becoming better developed every year thanks to the hard work of our programmer, Shayne Cook. The entire committee is beginning to resemble to workings of a well-oiled machine resulting in a wide array of conference sessions to address various areas of expertise and interest.

While reaching a 'perfect score' in an attempt to make everybody happy with an endeavor like this is an unattainable goal – we strive to find the best mix for the majority involved and look forward to anyone's comments and suggestions. A hearty "Thanks" again to all of those that served on this year's JEC planning committee as we look forward to a fantastic 2010. And with that, mark your calendars –

Speaker registration for the 2010 JEC will be open online from January 2 through March 31, 2010.
www.mtengineers.org

Vendor registration for the 2010 JEC will be open online on January 2, 2010 at the same website.

“A hearty “Thanks” again to all of those that served on this year’s JEC planning committee as we look forward to a fantastic 2010.”

**For 2010 Joint Engineer Conference
and other engineering news:
Visit: www.mtengineers.org**

Montana MATHCOUNTS - 2009-2010

CONGRATUATIONS!
Montana MATHCOUNTS
is a quarter-of-century
old!

*“It only takes a couple of
hours to help score at a
competition—we even
supply you with the
answers!”*

*“Contact the Coordinator
near you and mark your
calendar today!”*

NSPE initiated the MATHCOUNTS program twenty-six years ago and Montana has participated every year for the last twenty-five seasons! We hope this year is our biggest and best season ever!

Montana MATHCOUNTS is actively out fundraising to finance this year’s chapters and state competitions. Your donation is tax deductible and can be sent to Montana MATHCOUNTS Foundation, in-care of Montana Society of Engineers, PO Box 20996, Billings, MT 59104.

All of the chapters and state competitions are organized and run by volunteers and friends of Montana Society of Engineers. If you have the time and would like to be part of truly rewarding experience, listed below are the dates and coordinators of all seven of the chapters and state in 2010:

Kalispell Chapter

Friday—February 5, 2010
Flathead Valley Community College
Vicki Neill, Coordinator
Vicki.Neill@northwestern.com

Bozeman Chapter

Tuesday—February 9, 2010
MSU—SUB - Ballroom D
Jerry Stephens, Coordinator
jerrys@coe.montana.edu

Butte Chapter

Tuesday—February 9, 2010
War Bonnet Inn
Sandra Anderson, Coordinator
sandra_andersondavid@hotmail.com

Missoula Chapter

Tuesday—February 9, 2010
University of Missoula
Bev Young, Coordinator
byoung01@fs.fed.us

Billings Chapter

Friday—February 12, 2010
MSU Billings - Liberal Arts Building
Dan Munson, Coordinator
Dan.Munson@northwestern.com

Eastern Montana Chapter

Wednesday—February 17, 2010
Dawson County HS Auditorium
Mike Hunter, Coordinator
hunter@dawson.edu

North Central Chapter

Wednesday—February 17, 2010
MSU-Great Falls - Heritage Hall
Bill Burkland, Coordinator
bill@rpa-hln.com

State Competition

Wednesday—March 10, 2010
MSU—SUB - Ballroom A
Dan Munson, State Coordinator
Dan.Munson@northwestern.com

It only takes a couple of hours to help score at a competition—we even supply you with the answers! Contact the Coordinator near you and mark your calendar today!

We want to again thank our corporate sponsors for 2008-09 season. Without you, we would not have the funds necessary to make these competitions a success each year.

2008-09 Montana MathCounts

Corporate Sponsors

**American Public Works Association—
Rocky Mountain Chapter**

Ash Grove Cement Company

Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative

CHS, Inc.

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Montana Refining Company

Montana-Dakota Utilities

NorthWestern Energy

Robert Peccia and Associates

Stillwater Mining Company

Westmoreland Resources, Inc.

Yellowstone Electric Company

Also—American Linen Division

For more information about MathCounts, visit www.mathcounts.org or contact Dan Munson, Montana Mathcounts State Coordinator at dan.munson@northwestern.com.

MSE Office News!

Now is the time to review and count the number of PHDs you have gathered in preparation for the renewal of your P.E. license with the State of Montana. You will need 36 PHD for the two year license renewal—18 per year. REMINDER: Keep a watchful eye out for your only notification—a postcard from the PE & PLS Licensing Board—this can easily be missed. Renewals will be due this summer. Links to courses have been provided at the MSE website: www.mtengineers.org if you need to gather a few more courses! See article below.

This past year has been very exciting for the office. MathCounts and the JEC had very successful seasons! Many of the engineering firms that were reporting work slowdowns are now back up to speed and even back to overtime in some cases. The MSE Office will be closed from December 24 thru January 4. I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!

—Connie

2009-2010 MSE Board

Kenneth Phillips, President
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Crystal Kuntz, President-Elect
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mike.cech@northwestern.com

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Deadline for the Next
Issue of this Newsletter is
March 10, 2010

Submit articles and advertising to
mse@assoc-mgt.com

Links to courses have been provided at the MSE website: www.mtengineers.org if you need to gather a few more courses!

NSPE On-Demand Course Sale

The holidays are coming early this year! To help spread a little joy, and to make renewing your license easier, NSPE has marked down all of its [online courses](#) to **only \$49** until January 1, 2010. In addition to the four free PDHs available to all NSPE members, you can now save \$100 on any NSPE archived course. Some of our more popular sessions include:

[Ethics and Risk Management](#) (1.0 PDH)

Ethical behavior forms the foundation of any risk management program. This session demonstrates how the NSPE Code of Ethics can be used to form the basis of a firm's risk management program. The connection between ethical behavior and reduced professional liability will be illustrated using decisions of the NSPE Board of Ethical Review along with real-life professional liability claims.

[Thriving in the Economic Meltdown](#) (1.0 PDH)

Current economic conditions have brought a whole new level of "stress" to today's entrepreneur. Business as usual will probably not work. This session reviews the list of considerations for surviving, and even thriving, in a recessionary economy.

[Solving the Risks in Green Design and Construction](#) (1.0 PDH)

This presentation identifies the specific reasons that green buildings are at increased risk for failures and what contractors and developers/owners must do to avoid problems. Learn what practices are being promoted as green but are also placing the entire development team at risk.

[Proposal Do's and Don'ts](#) (1.0 PDH)

This session will help you review your proposal efforts—from a go/no go decision-making process to a review of what to include and not include in a proposal. This course also includes information about formatting and proposal layout design, common mistakes, language blunders, and other useful tips that participants can put to use immediately in their day-to-day marketing efforts.

PLEASE NOTE: *These prices are valid only until January 1, 2010, so be sure to take advantage of these savings while earning the PDH credits you need for license renewal. Also, please remember, that the four PDH courses currently being offered free to NSPE members will change to four different courses in the new year. If you are interested in viewing the current ethics seminars being offered, you must do so by January 1, 2010.*

“To help spread a little joy, and to make renewing your license easier, NSPE has marked down all of its [online courses](#) to only \$49 until January 1, 2010.”