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REPORTER

The Magazine of the Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers



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Pennsylvania's Infrastructure - A Call to Action
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The *PE Reporter* is published quarterly by the Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers (PSPE) located at 908 N. Second Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102. Phone: (717)441-6051 • www.pspe.org. Opinions expressed by authors herein do not necessarily reflect the opinion of PSPE.

Cover: The Saw Mill Run Pumping Station delivers wastewater to the Authority's plant along the Schuylkill River in Plymouth Meeting. Three new 250-HP dry-pit submersible pumps operate in conjunction with the existing three 200-HP pumps, providing a total of six pumps (one of which is a spare.) The original three pumps replaced were the original pumps installed in the 1960s. BCM Engineers of Plymouth Meeting, and Keystone Engineering Group of Exton, were the design consultants. See page 15 for more details.

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Is there life after retirement?

Leonard K. Bernstein, P.E., F.NSPE

That's a good question and one I will be trying to answer starting in late

March when, after 32 years, I'll be retiring from the City of Philadelphia.

I started my engineering career on Long Island probably the same way many civil engineers may have started – as a rodman on a survey crew for a consulting engineer. I knew I didn't want to stay as a rodman, but I needed experience. However, my boss, Jim deBruin, PE, PLS, the owner of the company, made sure I understood that my future as an engineer meant becoming licensed. He encouraged me and made sure I took the exam to be certified as an Intern Engineer (IE) as it was, and I think still is, known in New York. In Pennsylvania, we call it an Engineer In Training (EIT).

I moved from Long Island to Philadelphia in 1976 to start as a civil engineer for the Water Department of the City of Philadelphia and became a Pennsylvania EIT by comity. A few years later, I passed the PE exam and received my license as a Professional Engineer. I was proud to be a Professional Engineer, but, guess what – I work for a municipal government and I didn't need to be licensed. Even after 32 years of working as an engineer for the City of Philadelphia, I still don't need to be licensed. On behalf of the City of Philadelphia, I review sewage facilities planning and land development plans prepared by licensed Professional Engineers, but I don't have to be licensed. However, I still remember Jim deBruin telling me that I would need to be licensed to be credible as an engineer and that's exactly what happens today. I don't need to be licensed, but I am and when I comment on developments submitted for review, I have credibility. Yes, experience helps, but as a PE, I am recognized as having achieved a level in engineering that allows me to question or comment on a development prepared by another engineer.

So what does this have to do with my opening question? I think everything. I am licensed because of

the encouragement of a licensed Professional Engineer. I didn't have to become licensed, but I did and now, as I approach life after retirement, I have options. I feel I'm too young just to sit and read the newspaper all day or go play golf everyday (although my wife would probably be glad to have me out of the house).

I have options and it's great to have options. With my license, I can hang out my own shingle, so to speak, and become a consulting engineer on my own, or I could work for an established consulting engineer. I could work part time or I could work full time. I could even continue teaching as I do now as an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department of the College of Engineering at Temple University.

I have options for life after retirement and I have options because I listened to a licensed Professional Engineer when I was young. I listened to Jim deBruin and got my license. I reached the pinnacle of my profession because I was encouraged by a Professional Engineer to do so. And I have options because I reached the pinnacle of my profession. I became a licensed Professional Engineer.

Many of you who are reading this may already be experiencing life after retirement and many of you may be so far from retirement that you're not even giving it a thought, but your license will give you options.

Have you encouraged a young colleague or newly graduated engineer to seek licensure? I hope you have and I hope you have explained to him or her that licensure as a Professional Engineer will give him or her options – options to be recognized for his or her accomplishment during his or her career and options for life after retirement.

I'm looking forward to my life after retirement even though I'm not sure yet what that life will bring, but I know I'll be using my license in some way.

I'd love to hear what you think. If you'd like to comment, please send me your thoughts at lenbernsteinpe@yahoo.com. ■

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Tax Reform

Debate to Continue

John D. Wanner, CAE

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives originally planned to deal with various proposals to eliminate or reduce property taxes back in December. That debate was eventually postponed until the week of January 14th. At the end of that week, the House had indeed passed a Constitutional Amendment providing for the reduction of property taxes. However, both of those bills are considered dead on arrival in the Senate. The anticipated vote on bills that would expand or increase the state sales tax were again postponed, this time until January 28th.

The tax shifting bills (House Bill 1489 and House Bill 1600) take different approaches to reducing or eliminating local property taxes. House Bill 1489 simply increases the sales tax to 6.5% and directs the proceeds to offset lower property taxes. The other bill proposes to expand the sales tax to many items that are not presently subject to the tax, including services. Under that plan, all services would be taxable including design and construction services. At this time, it is not clear which of the bills will be voted on by the full House. And even though it seems likely that the House will pass some type of local tax reform bill, the Senate is said to have little interest in taking up the issue any time soon.

PSPE lobbyists have been working the Hill to prevent engineering services from being added to the list of services that will be subject to the sales tax. Members are encouraged to contact their state Representatives and urge

them to vote against expanding the sales tax to professional services.

Senate Committee Advances Kasunic Mine Safety Bill

The Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee met to consider SB 949, the Bituminous Coal Mine Safety Act. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Rich Kasunic (D-Fayette), provides for bituminous coal mines, creates a new Board of Coal Mine Safety to keep Pennsylvania's mine safety standards regularly updated, provides for greater responsibility for operators to ensure the safety, and enable the state to establish a central database of maps of mines throughout the Commonwealth, in addition to numerous other provisions. The bill was unanimously reported as amended. Senator Kasunic commented that this is an important piece of legislation for the safety of mine workers. The state's mining laws have not been rewritten for many years so an update is necessary, he remarked.

DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty called the bill a historic piece of legislation and a great step forward for mine safety. She suggested that a rewrite of mining laws is necessary going forward as there is more of a push to use indigenous energy sources in an effort to achieve energy independence. This is a bipartisan effort to protect mine workers, she concluded.

Sen. James Rhoades (R-Schuylkill) clarified that the bill does not affect mining of anthracite coal, which has a different set of rules. He then remarked that he hopes this bill will create an

emphasis on the use of Pennsylvania coal as an energy source.

Legislative Activity

HB 1489 RE: Sales Tax (by Rep. Bill DeWeese, et al)

Amends the Tax Reform Code by increasing the sales and use tax and the hotel occupancy tax to 6.5% (from 6%). The bill states that within thirty days of the effective date of this section, the department would prepare and publish a table setting forth the amount of tax imposed under section 202 for purchase prices that result in a tax containing a

fraction of less than a cent. The bill also adds that all revenues received by the department on or after July 1, 2008, from the increase in the rate of sales and use tax and hotel occupancy tax would be transferred monthly to the Property Tax Relief Fund established by the Taxpayer Relief Act. The bill states the Department would annually calculate a state property tax reduction allocation as provided in the legislation.

This bill is one of the vehicles for other tax reform proposals to be voted on the House floor, including another proposal to expand the sales tax to most all items and professional services. This vote did not happen in December, and is expected to occur by the end of this month.

Reported as committed from House Appropriations Committee, 1/16/2008

"Capitol" continued p. 21



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The Power of Discernment

Rebecca Bowman, Esq., P.E.

I saw a clever cartoon the other day. (I don't have the copyright holder's permission to use the image, though, so we'll have to go with a description.) Two people were walking by a cliff. They noticed a rock teetering on the edge of a cliff over their heads. That was called "Risk perception." In the second frame, they stood beneath the rock discussing their options. That was called "Risk assessment." In the third frame, the rock had started to fall and the two people were running away as fast as they could. That was called "Risk management."

Is that you? Do you discuss ways to avoid problems until the problems have already descended upon you? Do you then respond in a panic state? Trust me, you can't run faster than that rock can fall.

There is a worse possibility: Do you move through your business life without observing potential threats? When the rock falls, is it a complete surprise?

Neither of those approaches is a safe or prudent one. I don't care whether the issue is competitive pressure or regulatory compliance or staff retention or continuing professional education. The appropriate solution is neither to procrastinate nor to be intentionally oblivious.

Only by considering your risks and evaluating your alternatives can you take informed, wise measures to prevent damage to your business. When I teach about characteristics and traits in spiritual self-development, this is called discernment. Only by exercising your powers of discernment are you able to prepare yourself (and your business) in the optimal way.

Much as I detest the expression, "thinking outside the box," the concept is a valid one. Let's say that you own a heavy construction company

and that competitive pressures will no longer permit you to send out an old-fashioned transit with chains/tapes to do your site preparation measurements. It takes too long, requires too many hours, and is not sufficiently accurate. What are your options? Buy and learn new equipment? Subcontract the site preparation surveying work? Rent the equipment and train staff to operate it? Those are the obvious solutions. How about some less obvious ones?

Could you take on an intern? Could you provide a scholarship to encourage a student to pursue the skill set? Does the equipment supplier have some suggestions? Do they have a list of practitioners you could use as referrals? Could you team with a surveyor on a long-term basis? Do you know a surveyor who would like to work part-time?

What about looking at the situation from another perspective altogether? You could decline to bid on that portion of the workscope, which would pass that responsibility back to the general contractor. You could focus your company's strategic efforts to become more a special-purpose construction company. With a more-limited strategic focus, you are in a better position to control and manage the workscope on which you want to bid.

Specializing your focus could make you an attractive acquisition target. One of the larger companies might look at your newly-focused position and think, not that you were a competitor to be crushed (or ignored), but that you were a missing piece in their strategic puzzle.

But you don't want to narrow your focus, you want to expand it. You want to BE one of those larger companies. That's great! What's your plan?

"Risky" continued p. 20

Only by considering your risks and evaluating your alternatives can you take informed, wise measures to prevent damage to your business.



Classifieds

Civil/Environmental /PM.

Engineer with PE. Experience in design/engineering for municipal/industrial water/wastewater systems, oversee, schedule & provide quality control for engineering & design staff. Duties include: specification writing, cost estimating, equipment selection, interface with clients, some fieldwork including construction administration. Challenging opportunity for experienced professional. Job location: Reading, PA.

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Senior level engineer with PE.

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PSPE Rewards Excellence

David K. Williams, P.E.

It's time again to begin the selection process for the next PSPE Engineer of the Year and Young Engineer of the Year Award recipients. Further, please be aware of the additional awards that PSPE bestows upon Chapters.

These official PSPE awards recognize exceptional engineers. These individuals, through their efforts, enhance the stature of the engineering profession and are the epitome of the Professional Engineer. The PSPE Engineer of the Year Award recognizes an outstanding, distinguished engineer not necessarily only for his/her work for, or in, PSPE, but for his/her overall activities and achievements. Occupational and professional achievements, civic, political, and engineering affairs, and education represent the primary selection criteria for the Engineer of the Year.

The Young Engineer of the Year award is intended to identify and recognize an outstanding engineer no older than 35 as of Jan. 1, 2009. The evaluation criteria include collegiate achievements, professional and technical society activities, engineering experience, publications/patents, major engineering project achievements, and additional activities, such as civic, fraternal, or humanitarian endeavors.

An engineer can be nominated through each PSPE chapter awards committee or President. Various Chapter awards nomination forms, included in the State Awards Program Handbook (attached), are due to the PSPE Awards Committee by March 15, 2008. Nomination forms can be submitted to PSPE Headquarters, 908 N. Second Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102, or to me at the address below.

Award recipients will be recognized at the PSPE Annual Conference banquet on June 7, 2008, in Gettysburg, PA. All PSPE chapters are strongly encouraged to submit a nominee for these state awards. Please direct questions to: David K. Williams, P.E., Project Manager III, Michael Baker Corporation, Airside Business Park, 100 Airside Drive, Moon Township, PA 15108, dkwilliams@mbakercorp.com, phone: (412) 269-2087; fax: (412) 375-3998, cell: (412) 855-4540.



**Pennsylvania Society of
Professional Engineers**
Professional Engineers in Private Practice

Professional Development Award

*Johann F. Szautner, P.E.
Pa PEPP Northeast Region Vice Chair*

As you seek opportunities to gain visibility and recognition for your firm, remember that you need to toot your firm's horn. Applying for the Pennsylvania Professional Engineers in Private Practice Professional Development Award is the first step.

The PA/PEPP Professional Development Award is presented to the nominated engineering firm that has made outstanding contributions to the advancement and improvement of the engineering profession through its employment policies and practices. The purpose of the award is to recognize those firms with the best engineering employment practices, and to encourage all firms to adopt progressive policies and practices.

A "private practice" employer is a for-profit firm or branch office of a firm, the primary function of which is to provide engineering design or consulting services for infrastructure, facilities, or processes to clients in accordance with applicable state law. Firms that provide design and construction services, wholly owned suborganizations supplying design services to a single parent organization, and research and development organizations would not be eligible.

Final selection for the state award will be made by the PEPP Awards Committee on the basis of both current and longtime reputation of the organizations under consideration, with particular emphasis on the preceding twelve months.

The application is available on the web at www.pspe.org. To obtain printed copies of the form, contact PSPE at 717.441.6051.

All nominations must be submitted on the official form or a facsimile thereof. Incomplete forms may lead to disqualification or low rating of nominees. Applications submitted should contain precise and accurate data.

All attachments must be on 8½" x 11" paper and be clearly referenced in the application form.

The original and six copies of the nomination form and all attachments must be submitted, no later than March 15, 2008 to: PA/PEPP Professional Development Award, PSPE, 908 North Second Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102.

The winners are invited to receive their awards at the Society's Annual Convention in June. PSPE will send press releases about the winner to their local media and national publications.



2006 Report Card for Pennsylvania's Infrastructure Continuing the Effort

Christopher J. Menna, P.E.

Getting the Initial Message Out

Website traffic increased dramatically surrounding the press event with 1078 hits the day before, 8180 hits the day of and 4570 hits the day after.

ASCE members were interviewed for Report Card-related stories, including Gregory Scott, John Menniti, and John Kovacs (ASCE Pittsburgh); Christopher Menna (ASCE Philadelphia); Cheryl Rishcoff and Peter Terry (ASCE Lehigh Valley).

Due to budgetary limitations, the Pennsylvania Sections relied on a quick web search and Bacons reports from National to track media coverage. According to our calculations, we received more than 4.2 million media impressions from print media alone. The Associated Press office in Philadelphia picked up the story, and we also received coverage on 14 television stations (including CBS National and PCN), six radio stations, and 14+ online outlets (including CapitolWire.com, MSNBC.com, and Yahoo! Small Business).

Our efforts did generate a media response from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. Though it did not agree with all of our findings, the Department did appreciate our efforts in trying to raise awareness for infrastructure.

Background Highlights

February – April 2006: ASCE Pennsylvania Sections gathered information from professional societies, non-profit associations, and local, state and federal agencies for each infrastructure category. More than twenty civil engineers developed a detailed picture for our region, examining the condition of our infrastructure, its performance, funding, and capacity versus need. Before making final assessments, the Pennsylvania Sections took into account funding already budgeted to address the problems, as well as infrastructure renewal projects in progress. Grades were assigned to each category.

May 9, 2006: District 4 Sections of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)—Central Pennsylvania, Lehigh Valley, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh—hosted simultaneous press conferences launching the first Report Card for Pennsylvania's Infrastructure. ASCE provided regional information, assessments and recommendations for nine key infrastructure areas including Aviation, Bridges, Dams, Drinking Water, Navigable Waterways, Rail, Roads, Transit and Wastewater.

Fall 2006: ASCE members testified in the Governor's Transportation Reform Commission hearings throughout the commonwealth.

May 2007: District 4 ASCE Sections partnered with PSPE, ASHE, ITE, the Engineers' Club of Philadelphia, and others for the first joint society Day on the Hill in quite sometime. The early May 2007 Legislative Visit was a success with some eighty engineers attending appointments with seventy-five Pennsylvania Legislators. In addition, third grade students shadowed the engineers and accompanied them on the visits. The day was deemed a success on many levels, knowing that the coalition helped to push forward the passage of ACT 44. In fact, the four PA-ASCE Sections collectively won the ASCE National 2007 Best Legislative Day Award for their efforts.

Fall 2007: The same coalition of engineers began to organize another Legislative Day. This time the focus will be on Water and Wastewater, an area where the unified group feels that it can make an impact.

A Call to Action to Our Fellow PSPE Members

The PA ASCE Sections are planning another one-day visit to Harrisburg on Monday, May 12, 2008. The group is looking to partner again with PSPE and other technical societies. The ultimate goal would be to have a legislative briefing for all visitors and then have teams of two to three engineers visit state representatives. The purpose would be to personally hand-deliver and discuss the 2006 Report Card and to lobby specifically for water/wastewater legislation.

Additionally, we hope to reinforce that engineers should be recognized and regularly called upon to help make infrastructure policy and funding decisions. Interested PSPE members who would like to participate in a future Harrisburg Visit, please contact Greg Scott at gscott@chesterengineers.com

Summary, a wonderful effort has been started by a dedicated group of engineers. The PA Sections of ASCE thank PSPE for its support and look forward to working together to improve the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians.



Highlights

NSPE Board of Directors Meeting

*San Juan, Puerto Rico
January 5, 2008*

- The NSPE Board of Directors conducted a professional issues roundtable with leaders from the Colegio de Ingenieros y Agrimensores de Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rico Society of Professional Engineers. Among the topics included licensure, engineering practice, liability, ethics, and other items.
- NSPE President Bernie Berson reported on the Charter Agreement with the Korean Professional Engineering Association (KPEA), signed in September 2007, recent conversations on cooperation with the National Council of Examiner for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES), membership, and educational initiatives.
- NSPE Executive Director Larry Jacobson provided a report highlighting the importance of closer cooperation with various NSPE-related components, improvements to NSPE's physical infrastructure (including the development of a studio at NSPE headquarters to produce, broadcast, record and distribute continuing education programming), simplification of NSPE's dues renewal structure, Web site redesign, and other operational issues.
- The Board ratified ABET's approval for inclusion of INCOSE for membership in ABET.
- The Board approved a new policy to encourage more active state society liaison with state engineering licensure boards.
- The Board considered and discussed three strategic issues including
 - (1) NSPE Professional Policy redefinition and prioritization
 - (2) role of the NSPE House of Delegates, and
 - (3) more tax efficient NSPE operations
- The Board agreed to assist the Minnesota Society of Professional Engineers, through provision of in-kind services, in an effort to require that individuals in responsible engineering positions in government be licensed professional engineers.
- The Board agreed to explore the possibility of a future national meeting in New Orleans in response to a request by the Louisiana Engineering Society.
- The Board (1) accepted the Software Engineering Licensure Consortium Status Report, (2) supported the Consortium's recommendation for a path to software engineering licensure, and (3) endorsed NSPE's letter of support.
- The Board asked the NSPE Finance Committee, Membership Committee, and State Society Executives Council to explore options to address future issues relating to Life Membership.
- The Board approved a 12% dues increase for the 2008-2009 administrative year and an annual dues increase thereafter based upon the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

For more detail, access minutes from the new NSPE Web site at www.nspe.org/BOD/index.html and the accompanying attachments at www.nspe.org/bod/mo1-BODattachments.html. ■



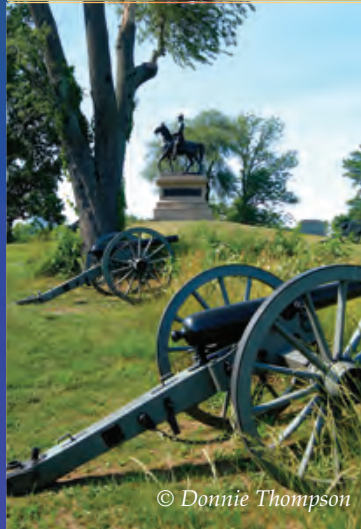
© George Bailey

2008 PSPE Conference in Historic Gettysburg

*John D. Bradshaw, P.E., PLS
PSPE President Elect*



© Donnie Thompson



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Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, is a lovely setting for our 2008 PSPE Conference to be held June 5 - 7 at the beautiful Wyndham Hotel. The new hotel's décor depicts the charm of Presidential America during the Civil War era. This year's conference committee has planned a variety of activities for your selection and enjoyment.

It will be a good time of year to plan your vacation around the conference and a great place to bring your family for sightseeing and learning the history of our nation. I hope you plan to attend as many of these activities as possible.

Thursday, June 5th

The PA State Registration Board will meet at the hotel in the morning, which will be open to all. At noon, a golf outing will be held at The Links at Gettysburg consisting of lunch, a round of golf (scramble format), and a one million dollar playoff. This will be followed by a Young Engineers mixer, a venue for meeting other engineers in the profession.

Friday, June 6th

Concurrent educational sessions consisting of both technical and executive levels of engineering will be provided. Gustav Person, a Civil War historian will discuss the importance of the Corps of Engineers during the Civil War. Many of the topics will be New York State approved for PDH credits. Companion tours within the Gettysburg area are also planned for this day. The Order of the Engineer Ring ceremony will be held before the dinner. It is an honorable and prestigious ceremony for all engineers to express before others their dedication to the engineering profession. All engineers who have not experienced the formality are welcome to participate. Following the ring ceremony will be the Gateway to Gettysburg Dinner with guest speaker, "Abraham Lincoln," who will be portrayed by Jim Getty of Gettysburg.

Saturday, June 7th

The Board of Directors meeting will be held in the morning, which is open to all members. There will also be a President's Council Meeting following, at which time all members are welcome to participate in the discussions about ways to better serve engineers. Then the President's Reception will be held, which will lead into the final and grand activity of the conference, the Installation and Awards Banquet. The officers for 2008 - 2009 will pledge to serve the society by fulfilling their duties for the next year. Awards will be given to a young engineer and seasoned engineer in recognition of their outstanding technical achievements and contributions to the engineering profession and mankind. Other awards of recognition will also be presented. The highlight of the evening will be our guest speaker, Former Governor of Pennsylvania and US Attorney General, Richard L. Thornburg, who also has an engineering degree. ■

2008 PSPE Conference
June 5 - 7
Wyndham Gettysburg

Watch
www.pspe.org
for details.

See you soon!



Saw Mill Run Pump Station

Kurt V. Leininger, P.E.
BCM Engineers



Bottom photo shows the pump station's old transformer and switchgear being removed and loaded.

The Saw Mill Run Pump Station has served the East Norriton-Plymouth-Whitpain Joint Sewer Authority since the early 1960s. Having been expanded and upgraded two or three times in the past 30+ years, the latest improvements were completed in December 2007.

Located on E. Johnson Highway in East Norriton Township, the facility delivers wastewater to the Authority's plant along the Schuylkill River in Plymouth Meeting. The station serves East Norriton Township, Plymouth Township, and Whitpain Township, all of which own smaller pumping stations that contribute to the Saw Mill Run Pumping Station.

Three new 250-HP dry-pit submersible pumps operate in conjunction with the existing three 200-HP pumps, providing a total of six pumps (one of which is a spare.) The original three pumps replaced were the original pumps installed in the 1960s. At design peak flows of approximately 21 million gallons per day, two of the new 250-HP pumps and all three of the 200-hp pumps will operate. The dual power supply system was upgraded as well, with new 480 volt switchgear and two substations each with a 1500 kVA transformer.

As is true for any retrofit project, proper sequencing of activities was a major challenge during construction to maintain continuous operation of the pumping system. The existing 200 HP pumps remained in service throughout the construction phase, backed up by three temporary diesel-engine standby pumps. A temporary electrical generator was also installed to provide backup power when one of the two substation/transformers was being replaced. The only period when the temporary pumps were required to operate alone was during a two-day period when the existing pump control panel was removed and a new programmable logic controller (PLC) installed. A temporary pump control PLC was installed early in the project to control the temporary pumps, and to also control the existing pumps during installation of the new permanent control system.

The general contractor was Klipper Construction of Yardley, and the electrical contractor was BSI Electrical of Montgomeryville. BCM Engineers of Plymouth Meeting, and Keystone Engineering Group of Exton, were the design consultants. Final construction costs were approximately \$1,125,000 for general construction and \$650,000 for electrical work. ■

2008 PSPE PAC Sponsor Recognition

Many thanks to the following individuals who contribute to the PSPE Political Action Committee fund. The PAC fund allows PSPE lobbyists to influence bills on behalf of PSPE members. PSPE is very active at the Pennsylvania state capitol. Each session we monitor legislation that could impact PSPE members in their profession. Your contributions are critical as PSPE affects bills such as those found in the article "On Capitol Hill."

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Amount Enclosed:

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☐ \$100

☐ \$ 50

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Make your personal checks payable to:
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CANNOT BE USED BY PAC.)

Send check to: PSPE/PAC, 908 N.
Second Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102.



Membership

Timothy S. Ormiston, PE

My niece, who always struggled with her high school math classes, insisted that it was not important to take, or pass, those classes. When was the last time you encountered a store cashier who could not count back change? How about the person who cannot calculate the best cost per unit measure at the grocery store? The fact is, mathematics is very important to our basic lives and that is a reason why MATHCOUNTS is an important program to support through PSPE / NSPE. We can help improve the education of middle school students across the state of Pennsylvania. Contact your local coordinator to volunteer at your local event! This is a great way of networking with other PSPE members and be a part of a very successful program.

We continue this issue with the series of articles presenting information on each of the PSPE practice divisions. Thomas R. Terry, P.E., Harrisburg Chapter Director, writes the following on Professional Engineers in Government:

Continuing Education in Pennsylvania can be an opportunity for PSPE Chapters to foster activity. Continuing education for PE's in Pennsylvania is knocking on at our door. If you have not been following the progress after our next License renewal in 2009 all Professional Engineers, Licensed Surveyors and Registered Geologists will be required to take 24 hours of approved continuing education to maintain their Professional Licenses.

My understanding is the first period affected by this may be from October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2011, and this cycle will follow every two years. All Professional Engineers, Licensed Surveyors and Registered Geologists are subject to the requirement and failure complete do so can lead to a fine of \$250 to \$1000 and/or a loss of license.

Government employers as well as private firms are going to need to accommodate their professional employees for this change in budgeting time for the professional earning the continuing

education credits and some of the funding for CEU courses. This article is not to debate how we got to this point or whether or not we are in favor of the requirement. We should look at the new requirements as an opportunity to grow our knowledge and grow our membership at the chapter level and in our practice areas such as PEG.

Other states such as our upstate neighbor New York has had this requirement for some time and also had the additional cost associated with the requirement. Following is one chapter's solution:

As reported in a PEG article published April 2005 by Jack Naylor PE of the Suffolk County Long Island, the local chapter provided CEU's and increased chapter membership by offering CEU courses at no cost to members that maintain a practice division membership and \$10 cost to member who do not belong to a practice division membership.

In our next issue there will be an article regarding the practice division Professional Engineers in Higher Education.

Should you, or someone you know, become interested in participating in the committee efforts, or if you have new ideas to share, please contact me via e-mail at: tsormiston@zoominternet.net. ■

"Any impatient student of mathematics or science or engineering who is irked by having algebraic symbolism thrust upon him should try to get along without it for a week" - Eric Temple Bell

Member Question of the Month...

Q At what point in your career did you join PSPE? At what point did you become active in PSPE?

A Send your reply to pspeinfo@pspe.org with the subject: Member Answer of the Month.



Pennoni Associates is pleased to announce that **David S. Lowdermilk, P.E.**, has been named the 2008 Engineer of the Year for Delaware County by the Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers, Delaware County Chapter. Mr. Lowdermilk currently serves as one of Pennoni's Vice Presidents and is the Transportation Technology Principal.

As Transportation Technology Principal, Mr. Lowdermilk manages a \$21 million a year portion of Pennoni's \$79 million total earnings, along with 142 staff members. He has extensive experience as a staff manager as well as a project manager and is a Registered Professional Engineer in 11 states. Mr. Lowdermilk serves as Principal-in-Charge of two major Pennoni clients, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Authority. Mr. Lowdermilk also serves as the Program Manager and Engineer of Record for the Burlington County Bridge Commission (BCBC).

"It was my pleasure to nominate Dave for the Engineer of the Year Award for Delaware County," stated C.R. Pennoni, P.E., Founder and Chairman of Pennoni Associates Inc. "Dave is honorable and honest in both his professional and personal dealings, and places his reputation, the reputation of the firm, and the reputation of our profession above all else. I am proud to call

Dave a colleague and a friend, and as a past recipient of this award, I enthusiastically congratulate him for receiving this highly esteemed honor."

Mr. Lowdermilk earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from The Pennsylvania State University. He is an active member of the Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers (PSPE), where he serves on the Board for the Delaware County Chapter; an active Board member of the American Society of Highway Engineers (ASHE) Delaware Valley Section; President of the American Council of Engineering Companies/PA (ACEC/PA) Philadelphia Chapter; and is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) as well as the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE).

A 24-year resident of Delaware County, Mr. Lowdermilk currently resides in Wallingford, PA. In his free time, Mr. Lowdermilk participates in various community activities. He is active in his synagogue and serves on the House and Grounds Committee. Mr. Lowdermilk also serves as Stage Manager with The Players Club of Swarthmore, a non-profit community theatre company based in Delaware County. Furthering his activities in theatre, Mr. Lowdermilk is active with Wasted Talent Productions, <http://www.wastedtalentproductions.com>, where he is a partner in a production company that provides technical theatrical expertise, including set design/construction, lighting, sound, and staging to high school and middle school groups.



Erdman Anthony announces the appointment of **D. Vincent Weiser, PE** to Chief Operating Officer and the formation of a new organizational structure designed to meet the current needs of an ever-changing market. "We believe our new structure best leverages our current talent pool by aligning professional expertise and talent with current market demands," said Vince Weiser, COO. Effective

immediately, Erdman Anthony has formed five Expert Teams designed to support each of its new market focused Core Business Units. Those teams and their leaders are as follows: Geospatial Services: Bryan A. Merritt, PLS; Civil Engineering: Daniel J. Ziemianski, PE; Facilities Engineering and Design Services: Tad Bandurowski, PE; Transportation Engineering: Richard E. Stees, PLS; and Construction Services, Curt A. Helman, PE.



Benatec Associates, Inc. is pleased to announce that **Richard S. Poplaski, P.E.**, has been promoted to Chief Highway Engineer. He is responsible for the monitoring of all on-going roadway projects, including budget control, design processes, personnel supervision, and client satisfaction. Mr. Poplaski has 18 years of experience in transportation and site design which includes conceptual, preliminary and final design, and design/build of complex new and rehabilitation projects, including related environmental services.

Mr. Poplaski holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Lafayette College and a Master of Science from The University of Virginia, both in Civil Engineering. He is an active member of various organizations including PEPP, PSPE, ACEC/PA, and ASHE. His community efforts involve membership in the West Shore Chamber of Commerce and wrestling coach for Camp Hill High School.



*DandelionSky Photography
Livonia, Michigan*

Remember Linus from the “Peanuts®” cartoon? Linus was the character who always toted a security blanket. The other characters teased him about his blanket, but he always carried it with him.

Before he passed away, “Peanuts” creator Charles Schultz lovingly gave our organization the right to use the name “Project Linus” along with the image of Linus. Project Linus was born in Colorado (1995) when our founder, Karen Loucks, saw a photo in *Parade Magazine* of a downy-haired little girl holding a blanket.

The picture touched her heart and the moment she read the article about that little girl undergoing chemotherapy, Karen decided to crochet blankets for children going through chemotherapy at a nearby facility. The blankets were so loved that the idea of making blankets for children in need caught on quickly. Now there are hundreds of Project Linus chapters all over the United States. We make all types of handmade blankets: crocheted, knitted, quilted and tied fleece. Blankets are delivered locally by each chapter, but all chapters will help coordinators in extraordinary circumstances such as cases like the Columbine High School shootings and Hurricane Katrina.

I manage our chapter finances, track the number of blankets we collect and distribute quarterly, report everything to headquarters, and deliver the blankets, but I’m just the tip of the iceberg. Our “blanketeers” are the most important part.

I’ve delivered 644 blankets to date (through 2007). Most of the time I just trust the chaplain at

the hospital, or the child care workers, or the ambulance attendants to wrap the right kids in the blankets. I don’t always know the story of each blanket after it leaves my hands, but occasionally a thank-you note or story will get back to one of the blanketeers.

The first story that ever came back to me involved a man who accidentally backed over his 3-year-old daughter with a lawn mower. She was life-flighted to Geisinger Children’s Hospital in Danville; not only were both arms broken, but she was badly cut. She received a Project Linus blanket in the helicopter. The family attends church with me and we prayed for the family. When the little girl was released from the hospital and came back to church, I recognized the blanket she was carrying. It was my first assurance that our blankets were really going where we intended them to go.

I deliver blankets to facilities such as Tyler Hospital, Children and Youth Services, American Red Cross, local fire departments and ambulance crews, Victims’ Resource Center, Wyoming Valley Children’s Association, Mom’s House, and Nurse Family Partnership.

Mom’s House is a free day care facility where babies and toddlers can stay while their mothers attend high school or college classes. The service is offered by a local church to the young mothers as an alternative to abortion. Wow! What an impact. I delivered enough blankets for every child in the program to have a security blanket at nap time. It was also the first thank-you note we received. All the time and work we put into those blankets was more than rewarded with that simple thank-you note. We DO make a difference.

Nurse Family Partnership works with at-risk moms from pregnancy until their kids turn two

“Linus” continued p. 20



"Linus" continued from p. 19
years old. These moms come from homes that didn't have model parents, were rape victims and decided to keep their babies, etc. Nurse Family Partnership helps these moms prepare for their babies by teaching basic life skills, helping them get jobs, showing them how to balance a check book, prepare nutritious meals, clean their houses, etc. In essence, they give the moms hope.

As one girl was in the hospital after giving birth, her Partnership nurse brought a Project Linus blanket for her baby. The new mom could not believe that someone lovingly made something so beautiful for her baby. Nobody ever cared about her, so she was shocked that someone did something so nice for

her baby...with no strings attached. The stories go on and on.

Our gifts of basic human kindness make a difference in the lives of those around us. While our direct mission is for children, we touch a lot of adult hearts, too. I've been told on more than one occasion that we restore faith in human kindness. This experience is such a blessing to me. What a rewarding way to spend my free time! ■

Holly graduated from Wilkes University in 1988 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Engineering Management, a full 10 years after she graduated high school. She was widowed before she could legally consume an alcoholic drink. Holly decided to go to school when her son became old enough to go to school. Her PE license is in Civil Engineering. Holly worked 20 hours per week, hand drafting for a surveyor, while attending college. During the summers, she interned with PennDOT as a surveyor, environmental manager's assistant, and an inspector. Holly is a member of the PSPE Luzerne County Chapter. For more details visit www.projectlinus.org.

"Risky Business" continued from p. 9

You may need to consider what component of a possible range of services you are not currently offering, what skills and capabilities the larger companies are offering that you are not. It may be time for you to consider acquiring a complementary company to expand your options or to consider a specific person whose reputation your honor as an addition to your staff, either as an employee or as a co-owner.

Your customers will likely be a factor in your plans, too. Do you have strong long-term relationships with your customers? That can be both a boon and a bane. Those relationships may give you direct entrée to work that won't be going out to bid. However, if you are too dependent on a very limited number of customers to provide you with more than 50% of your revenue, you are vulnerable. If one of your key clients gets annoyed or unsatisfied, you would be shaken by their departure. (Keeping on top of that issue is a topic of another column.) On that thought, make certain that you are doing all that you can, both in terms of contractual limitations and in terms of competitive compensation and good morale, to keep your people. You could be shaken by their departure, too.

Whether you want to build a nice, safe cocoon or shoot for the stars, you have to have intention and a plan. Without exercising your discernment, you are running a risky business. ■

The "Risky Business" column offers articles covering liability from both the legal and engineering perspective. Mrs. Bowman's articles share general information and should not be relied upon as professional legal advice of either a general or specific nature. Rebecca Bowman is a civil engineer-attorney in solo private practice in McMurray, Pennsylvania for more than 25 years. Her practice is a certified woman-owned business. Her B.S. in Civil Engineering is from the University of North Dakota.

2008

March 29 **Pennsylvania MATHCOUNTS Competition**
Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey Hotel
Harrisburg, PA

June 5 - 7 **PSPE Annual Conference**
Wyndham Gettysburg
Gettysburg, PA

July 24 - 27 **NSPE Annual Meeting**
Portland, OR

October 2 - 4 **NSPE Northeast Region Meeting**
Portland, ME

"Capitol" continued from p. 7

HB 1600 RE: Supplemental Homeowner Property Tax Relief Act (By Rep. David Levdansky, et al)

Establishes the Personal Income Tax Surcharge Fund. The bill would charge a surtax equal to 0.5% imposed on the purchase price of property and services subject to taxation. There would also be a surtax equal to 0.22% imposed on the taxable income of resident and nonresident individuals. The department would calculate the State allocation pursuant to this chapter for each school district and each year, in which a school district receives a local property tax reduction allocation pursuant to this act, the school district would calculate a homestead and farmstead exclusion. This bill is one of the vehicles for other tax reform proposals to be voted on the House floor, including another proposal to expand the sales tax to most all items and professional services. This vote did not happen in December, and is expected to occur by the end of this month.

Reported as committed from House Appropriations Committee, 1/16/2008

HB 1821 RE: New Home Construction Consumer Protection Act (by Rep. Frank Andrews Shimkus, et al)

Provides for the regulation of home construction contracts and for the registration of certain home builders; prohibits certain acts; provides for penalties; establishes the Home Builder Guaranty Fund; and provides for claims against the fund.

House Consumer Affairs Committee Hearing set for 1/16/2008 rescheduled to 3/13/2008, 1:00 p.m., Ramada Inn, 820 Northern Blvd., Clarks Summit

SB 949 RE: Bituminous Coal Mine Safety Act (By Sen. Rich Kasunic, et al)

Provides for bituminous coal mines, creates a new Board of Coal Mine Safety to keep Pennsylvania's mine safety standards regularly updated, provides for greater

responsibility for operators to ensure the safety, and enable the state to establish a central database of maps of mines throughout the Commonwealth, in addition to numerous other provisions.

Referred to Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, 1/11/2008

Reported as amended from Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, and read first time, 1/15/2008

Rereferred to Senate Appropriations Committee, 1/16/2008

New Bills Introduced

HB 2164 RE: Bituminous Coal Mine Safety Act (by Rep. Tim Solobay, et al)

Provides for bituminous coal mines, creates a new Board of Coal Mine Safety to keep Pennsylvania's mine safety standards regularly updated, provides for greater responsibility for operators to ensure the safety, and enable the state to establish a central database of maps of mines throughout the Commonwealth, in addition to numerous other provisions. This is a comprehensive rewrite of the Coal Safety laws. It is identical to the introduced version of SB 949.

Referred to House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, 1/15/2008

Upcoming Meetings of Interest

3/13/2008 - House Consumer Affairs Committee
1:00 p.m., Ramada Inn, 820 Northern Blvd., Clarks Summit

Public hearing on: HB 1821 – provides for the regulation of home construction contracts & for registration of certain home builders; prohibiting certain acts; providing for penalties; establishing the Home Builder Guaranty Fund; & providing for claims. ■

2008 HOUSE SPRING SESSION SCHEDULE

The House has announced the following session days for Spring 2008, subject to change

| | |
|----------|--|
| February | 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, and 13 |
| March | 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, and 31 |
| April | 1, 2, 7, 8, and 9 |
| May | 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, and 14 |
| June | 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30 |

2008 SENATE SPRING SESSION SCHEDULE

The Senate has announced the following session days for Spring 2008, subject to change

| | |
|----------|--|
| February | 4, 5, 6, 11, 12 |
| March | 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 31 |
| April | 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 28, 29, 30 |
| May | 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21 |
| June | 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30 |

Copies of all bills of interest are available from the PSPE office, or they can be accessed via the Internet at <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/BI/billroom.htm>.



| Issue | Distribution | Closing Date – ads & articles due |
|-------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| Spring 2008 | April | March 15, 2008 |
| Summer 2008 | July | June 15, 2008 |
| Fall 2008 | October | September 15, 2008 |
| <i>Member Directory</i> | October | September 15, 2008 |
| Winter 2009 | January | December 15, 2008 |

| ADVERTISING RATE SCHEDULE | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|--|
| Ad | Single run | Four <i>PE Reporter</i> | Four <i>PE Reporter</i> + Member Directory |
| 2 page corporate profile | \$ 800 | | |
| Back cover | \$ 700 | \$ 2000 (\$ 500 per) | \$ 2500 (\$ 500 per) |
| Inside front | \$ 600 | \$ 1800 (\$ 450 per) | \$ 2250 (\$ 450 per) |
| Inside back | \$ 500 | \$ 1600 (\$ 400 per) | \$ 2000 (\$ 400 per) |
| 1 full page | \$ 400 | \$ 1400 (\$ 350 per) | \$ 1750 (\$ 350 per) |
| 1/2 page | \$ 350 | \$ 1200 (\$ 300 per) | \$ 1500 (\$ 300 per) |
| 1/4 page | \$ 300 | \$ 1000 (\$ 250 per) | \$ 1250 (\$ 250 per) |
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- ☐ Spring 2008
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