



THE FORGE

Shaping the future, one design at a time!
Newsletter of the Birmingham Branch of ASCE

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Meeting Information for November 6th

Our monthly meetings are held at the Altadena Valley Golf and Country Club off of the Acton Road exit on I-459. The meetings start at 11:30 am.

The Club's address is 2651 Alta Vista Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35243 and can be reached from the Acton Road exit just west of Highway 280 on I-459. The club's phone number is 205.967.5322. Please visit the website for maps and directions from your location.

The Branch has an agreement with Altadena Country Club for a minimum of 30 lunches each month. The price is \$14.00 per person, which you can pay to the Branch Secretary/Treasurer at the meeting or online at our website. We request that if you plan to attend the meeting and pay onsite, please contact Karen Phillips at 205-981-4547 or through the Branch's e-mail at bham.asce@gmail.com and indicate your plans no later than close of business October 31st. In order for Altadena to plan for the meals and to ensure enough food is available, we must indicate the total number of lunches required and once the branch confirms the RSVP list we are held accountable for that total amount regardless of the number of people attending. Therefore it is imperative that you indicate your plans no later than the fourth Friday of each month.

Mark Your Calendars and Save the Dates!

- The Alabama Section Winter Meeting will take place on January 29, 2009 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.
- The Section's Summer meeting is tentatively scheduled to take place in Gulf Shores on July 29th through August 2, 2009.
- The Alabama Transportation Conference is schedule to take place on February 2, 2009 in Auburn, Alabama.

November's Presenter

We are pleased to have Daniel Green, the Technical Service Manager for National Cement Co. of Alabama, Inc as our technical presenter for November's meeting. Daniel is a graduate of Civil Engineering from The Central New England College of Technology in Massachusetts and has over 33 years of experience in the construction industry concrete. Daniel will be discussing the pros and cons of pervious concrete.



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2009 Infrastructure Report Card Photo/Video Contest

Calling all photographers and videographers! Enter the 2009 Report Card for America's Infrastructure Photo and Video Contest by sending us images of infrastructure across the country. We need you to get out in the field and show us the deteriorating state of your community's infrastructure. Winners will receive a cash prize and their entries may be used in promotional materials for the 2009 Report Card.

Get full contest details and enter at: <http://www.asce.org/reportcard/2005/index.cfm>

****NEW**** Watch a short video about the contest.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRgcPsB2yj8>

Who knows you may have the winning photo!



A Message from the President

By Bobby Nolen

Expanding Horizons

In the early 1990s, the Branch initiated the process to expand its formal boundaries (then and now defined as Jefferson and Shelby Counties) to include the Birmingham Metropolitan Statistical Area. At that time, the additional area would have included parts of Tuscaloosa, Walker, Blount, and St. Clair Counties. For reasons not explained in the Branch archives or recalled by the participants at that time, the change in boundaries was never finalized.

I seek to redress that aborted attempt and will have a member formally propose an amendment to the by-laws that will expand our defined geographic boundaries to include those counties named above, less Tuscaloosa, since the Tuscaloosa County now encompasses the Tuscaloosa Branch's boundaries. Upon passing the amendment, the Branch would then have to petition the Section for its formal concurrence with the new boundaries.

Expanding our boundaries would make many ASCE members aware of the opportunity to join and participate in Branch activities. The new boundaries would resolve several awkward situations where ASCE members living and working just outside Jefferson or Shelby Counties want to participate and have done so in the past, yet they cannot enjoy the full benefit of membership. Finally, the infusion of dues-paying members would improve our financial capabilities, fortify our volunteer program involvement, and provide new ideas and energy.

Please attend the November meeting to share your opinions and insights on this matter.

A Message from the President (continued)

By Bobby Nolen

Critical Mass

Karen Phillips, the Branch Sec-Treas., gave me some interesting statistics recently. Analyzing the meeting attendance records of a recent 12-program interval, Mrs. Phillips found that:

- There were 147 different people who attended the meetings.
- The average meeting attendance was 36.
- There were 23 individuals who attended 6 or more meetings.
- Over half attended only one meeting.
- No one attended all 12 meetings.
- Only 75 members during the same period paid the local \$10 dues.

It appears over 70 people chose to take advantage of the Branch by attending at least one meeting, enjoying the fellowship, and earning professional development without paying dues. The volunteer group's form of Pareto's Law is alive and well, as a small percentage attend most of the meetings. From my recollection of the attendance when I was last President, the average is the same as it was 15 years ago.

My reason for these statistics of the general is to ask you to consider specifically where you are within the numbers. Do you come once a year for that special program or presenter? Do you come when a colleague or associate reminds you about the meeting? Is your Branch membership as important as your ASCE membership? Have you paid your Branch dues, which must be paid directly to the Branch? Please decide to become more than a number. Be a member.

It's Budget Time

At the November meeting, the Branch will consider and pass the Budget. There are many line items that are mundane or traditional. Among the more critical items will be my proposal that the Branch would purchase a projector and a decision on the disposition of the proceeds from the golf tournament last year.

Most presenters now use PowerPoint or some other computer projection software to display the contents of the program. Often, presenters do not have or bring their own projectors, so the Branch frequently scrambles to have one available, usually by begging another member to bring one. Often compatibility or completeness (right connections, power cords, remote) becomes an issue.

Having a projector would also enable the Branch to move toward a nearly paperless meeting. Having a projector would allow the Sec-Treas. to place the minutes and financial statements on a projector loop for members to read during the meal and eliminate the need to have these documents printed hard copy. The agenda would still be available hard copy to document attendance for professional development credit.

A Message from the President (continued)

By Bobby Nolen

The savings account contains an amount (about \$5,000) that represents the balance of the net proceeds realized from last year's golf tournament. However, because of the small number of dues-paying members (75) and the deficit from last year's coloring competition (about \$2,500), the actual budget surplus was about \$2,000. The Branch will not receive the Section allotment (about \$600) until after December and new dues payments barely trickle in. Therefore, the Branch has little operating income to pay obligations normally due at the beginning of its program year. The Branch will consider, as its decision on the Budget, the disposition of the scholarship fund and the timing of disbursements. Please attend the November meeting and lend your insight and opinion to the discussion.

Speaking of Money

Over 1,000 fourth graders are now primed to begin the Branch's 19th coloring competition. Last year, only eight companies contributed to the competition funding, for a total of \$1,550.00. One company alone accounted for more than half of the amount.

In November, I will petition the employers of our members' companies and companies in industry with whom engineers do business to support this endeavor by contributing \$100 each. This "Color Me a Centennial" campaign will allow the competition to pay its own way and distribute the economic impact among many contributors. However, if any one company or individual would finance the entire \$4,000 competition budget, it will not hurt my feelings. Look for your Centennial notice next month.

Speaking of Speaking

Vice President Clark still has a couple of spots open for speakers for next year's programs. If you know of someone who has an interesting topic or if you would volunteer to tell us about a project, process, or adventure in engineering, please contact John at the number shown in the banner of this newsletter.

2009 Leadership Training in Government Relations Scheduled

The 2009 Leadership Training in Government Relations Program, or the "Legislative Fly-In", will take place March 25-26, 2009 in Washington, D.C. Applications will be available shortly at <http://www.asce.org/govrel>

This one and a half day program provides Section leaders and interested ASCE members with training on important civil engineering issues and how to establish and maintain relationships with elected officials.

For further information contact ASCE Government Relations at govwash@asce.org or 202-789-7850.

Do You have Your Required Annual PDH's?

For some engineers it is a real struggle to obtain your required Professional Development Hours (PDH's) each year. For Alabama you are required to have 15 PDH's annually in order to demonstrate that an engineer maintains an acceptable level of competency. Some states require that in addition to technical PDH's you must obtain a minimum number of development hours in ethical training. An upcoming seminar presented by ASCE called "Leadership Development for the Engineer" (16 PDH, 1.6 CEU including 1-hr of ethics training) will take place in Atlanta, Georgia on December 4-5. Details on this popular seminar can be found in the brochure at www.asce.org/conted/seminars/seminar.cfm?cat=6#abc146abc. This is just one of many ways to ensure you meet the PDH requirements and remember the year is almost gone!

Newsletter Sponsors – Thank You

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Where else can you reach over 500 people for such a low price? Put your company on the map today!

Don't see your company's name here? Support your branch! For a fee of \$50.00 per month your company's name can reach over 500 engineers, scientists and potential clients in the Birmingham Area. If you would like to advertise in next month's issue, please contact Karen Phillips @ 205-981-4547 or mail your check to P.O. 190366, Birmingham, AL 35219.

Branch Contact Information

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Do you have something to say? Let's hear it, and maybe your thoughts will be in the next newsletter.

PLEASE RETURN THIS STUB WITH PAYMENT:

DUES: ASCE Birmingham Branch (2008-2009) Total Due: \$10.00(Tax Id. No.63-0371391)

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: ASCE-Birmingham Branch
P.O. Box 190366, Birmingham, AL 35219

Name: _____

Email: _____

Company: _____ Phone: _____

Interested in volunteering your time? _____