

FIELD NOTES

The Newsletter of the Council of Professional Surveyors

Dear Colleague:

As a COPS member here is your free copy of the audiotape of the COPS convention session at the ACEC convention in Boston last May. It's about one hour. It covers a wide range of issues facing land surveyors preceded by a round-the-table summary of how business is doing around the country by the attendees of the session. The sound quality varies as some people are softer spoken than others, but if you stay with it there are some nuggets of information that will help you in your daily business. Thank you for being a member of COPS.

Improving Your Odds With The Engineering Excellence Awards

It is hard to believe that three years of working with the Engineering Excellence Awards Committee (EEAC) have come and gone. One of my personal goals was to sit down after the three-year assignment and compose my thoughts on how to improve your odds at putting together a winning entry.

The first and utmost thing that I would point out is to remember the five rating guidelines. The judges will be concentrating on a project that is 1) Original or Innovative Application of New or Existing Techniques, 2) Technical Value to the Engineering Profession, 3) Social & Economic Considerations, 4) Complexity, and 5) Meeting and Exceeding Owner/Client Needs. This is all written up more succinctly in the call for entries; however, what I would like to point out is this – in your one page summary of the project answer how your project qualifies in each of these categories and if at all possible do the same on your panel.

The second item would be to not waste time describing your company on the one page summary or the panel – SELL THE PROJECT. I've heard too many judges that were turned off from a presentation that was selling the company.

The third point would be that spelling and punctuation do count. Judges are not impressed with a presentation that was poorly written and not proof read. This goes for the presentation, summary, and panel. Spend the time to get it right.

Last point would be a picture is worth a thousand words. That should be rewritten to say that an exciting or interesting picture is worth a thousand words. Too many panels have dull boring photographs. I would suggest that you test your photographs out using the Seven Year Old Test (this is a mild adaptation of something taught by David Hatem, Esq.). Simply put, show the pictures to your seven-year-old child. If you don't have a seven year old find one. If they look at the pictures and are not interested then get better pictures. We put together phenomenal projects—find pictures that do them justice.

These points are items that I've heard during three separate judging's. I've heard them often enough and from enough separate judges to believe that they are valid. The Engineering Excellence Program and each of us will only benefit by improving our entries. While I'm up on this soapbox I offer one more statement. EEAC is one of the most enjoyable committees on which I've served and I would recommend each of you participate.

David G. Ray, P.L.S
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Highway Robbery" Legislation Threatens DOT Engineering Work; ACEC Pledges "To Kill It"

Legislation designed to make it more difficult for state Departments of Transportation (DOT) to outsource engineering services has been introduced in the House of Representatives.

Rep. Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick (D-MI), has introduced H.R. 1980 designed to force state transportation agencies to conduct cost-benefit analyses and comply with other mandates before outsourcing engineering services for any federally-aided project exceeding \$100,000.

"This legislation is lousy public policy and a clear attempt to stop outsourcing," said ACEC Transportation Committee Chairman Jerry Stump. He added that the bill "is completely at odds with the current trend in government to maximize use of private sector expertise and innovation."



ACEC Transportation
Committee Chairman
Jerry Stump

H.R. 1980 sets forth the terms of the cost comparisons between performing the engineering work in the private sector versus in-house. The analysis will among other items, compare salaries and benefits, along with the estimated cost of unemployment compensation for state employees displaced by outsourcing.

"Any ACEC member firm that does business with a state DOT would be hurt by passage of this legislation," said ACEC President Dave Raymond. "This is just the opening salvo on the union side. ACEC government advocacy efforts will focus on key committee leaders to assure this legislation is defeated. If needed, ACEC members will be asked to weigh in with their House and Senate members to kill this misguided legislation."

H.R. 1980 was referred to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, as well as the House Government Reform Committee. Congresswoman Kilpatrick does not serve on either committee. It is expected that a version of the Kilpatrick bill will be offered as an amendment when legislation to reauthorize TEA-21 comes up later this year.

Another "Toolkit" Available For You

COPS likes to promote its toolkit for its members that includes contracts, job descriptions, a job estimating spreadsheet among other things. However the National Geodetic Survey has its own version of a toolkit available online for anyone to use. To see what's there go to www.ngs.noaa.gov/TOOLS/.