

### President's Report

By John Nelson



John Nelson, President  
ACEC of Maine

With the recent turmoil in the economy, it was refreshing to hear Professor Charles Colgan of USM's Muskie School speak at our September 17<sup>th</sup> members meeting about the favorable outlook for the environmental services and

civil engineering economic cluster. We were fortunate to hear from someone of his stature and experience and his insight did not disappoint those in attendance. After briefly discussing the tough economic climate and its root causes, Dr. Colgan discussed his research on technology clusters and how they can be the drivers of future economic development and growth. An adequate STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) workforce will be crucial to the success of these clusters. Does that sound like our industry? Well, Dr. Colgan believes it does and he is bullish on engineering services and notes that the environmental services and civil engineering cluster is already sustainable while other technologies are less established.

Even before hearing Dr. Colgan speak, the ACEC of Maine Board of Directors has been discussing how to do a better job advocating for our needs. As I reported in the last newsletter and at the September meeting, we are looking at a more proactive approach to advocacy, not ignoring the important monitoring work that our A/E Legislative Task Force does, but enhancing it. Through a number of meetings with both the Associated General Contractors of Maine and the Maine State Chamber, we are exploring establishing coalitions that focus on developing infrastructure needed for economic growth. By joining forces with other organizations, we can become a much more powerful force in advocating for our industry. See the article on this topic elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The above discussions have obviously taken a fair amount of energy and time, but we have been working on other initiatives as well. In conjunction with the College of Engineering at the University of Maine, we have been working on an Economic Value Study to gauge the value of engineering services exported by virtue of out-of-state work performed by our in-state engineering staffs. The original letter request was sent May 27 and a final email reminder was sent on July 7, 2008. We need just a few more responses to make the study meaningful and to provide both the College and us important data to support funding and policy decisions. If you need more information on the survey please contact either Chet Rock (581-2218) or Paul Lariviere (622-5714).

We are also working hard on the Engineering Excellence Awards and Fall Forum programs. Please see the story regarding these important programs. I encourage everyone to attend what I fully expect to be an excellent Fall Forum program at the University of Maine in Orono on November 19<sup>th</sup> (and the networking reception the evening before).

The ACEC of Maine web site is finally getting a make-over. We are using an outfit that has developed a template for other ACEC state organizations to use. The cost is very competitive and we will be able to

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### Save these Dates

ACEC Fall Forum -

Networking Reception - Nov 18th

Fall Forum & EEA Program - Nov 19th

ACEC Board of Directors Meeting - 12/10th

National Engineers Week - Feb 15-21st

Maine Engineering Festival - Feb 21st

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maintain and update the site ourselves. The goal is to have the new site operational by the end of 2008.

After what seems like forever, Brian Ames of Ames A/E resigned as Secretary of the Board. We thank Brian for his service and his counsel will be deeply missed. But with sad news comes exciting news and I am very pleased to report that JoAnn Fryer of CLD Consulting Engineers has been elected by the Board as a new State Director. JoAnn has been active on the DOT Task Force and we look forward to her further involvement on the Board. Also, Jim Wilson of Woodard & Curran has been appointed by the Board to serve as Secretary. Jim has been a great addition to the Board for the last couple of years and we look forward to his continuing leadership. Please join me in congratulating our new leaders.

We look forward to hearing about your thoughts on our advocacy efforts. One of our strategic planning goals was to advance this issue and we are excited by the short and long-term opportunities ahead, feeling that they have a real chance to advance our industry in Maine.

Make your room reservations in Orono for November 18<sup>th</sup> and let's have a great turnout for the Fall Forum and University visit.

### **Question 3: Bond Issue**

Question 3 on November's ballot has not received much, if any, publicity. This question asks voters to approve a \$3.4M bond to design, construct or improve drinking water supplies or treatment and distribution systems and the construction and/or upgrading of wastewater treatment facilities. By issuing these bonds, the State will leverage \$17M in additional funds from federal programs. The bond value is split evenly, with \$1.7M going into the state's safe drinking water revolving loan fund and \$1.7M going into the state revolving loan fund for wastewater. As funding for infrastructure is critical to our clients and our firms, we encourage you to vote "Yes" on Question 3 and to encourage all your employees and colleagues to do likewise.

## **ACEC National Efforts**

While the ACEC of Maine Board of Directors has been active in nurturing relationships to advance our statewide advocacy, the national organization continues to be the "Voice of the Engineering Industry". Please view their website ([www.acec.org](http://www.acec.org)) for information about advocacy and member benefits, but here are a few items of interest:

- Passage of emergency legislation to shore up the Highway Trust Fund. This \$8B funding was needed for the solvency of the fund and to prevent state highway funds from drying up. ACEC and its grassroots lobbying was instrumental in its passage.
- President Bush signed into law Student Loan Forgiveness for Engineers providing up to \$10,000 in loan forgiveness. Former ACEC Chairman Ed Mulcahy led the effort for this law which will be an important step in reversing the decline of engineering graduates.
- With ACEC's urging, the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works approved the Water Quality Financing Act authorizing \$38.5B over 5 years for projects funded through the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act SRF programs.
- ACEC is working with legislative leadership to include infrastructure funding in any future economic stimulus packages. Funding could provide immediate economic growth and jobs as many projects just need funding.

Those are some example of ACEC's activities in Washington. Given the financial crisis and huge competing needs for funding, it is nice to know that we have a strong industry voice.

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## **Fall Forum on November 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>**

ACEC of Maine is excited to be holding the Fall Forum at the University of Maine campus in Orono this year, allowing members to see new campus facilities and interact with future engineers. The event will kick off with a Networking Reception at the Buchanan Alumni House on Tuesday evening, November 18<sup>th</sup>, from 7 to 9 PM. This will be an excellent chance to network with colleagues and University professors.

The Fall Forum will be held on Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at the Wells Conference Center. To start the day, Dean of Engineering Dana Humphrey will present Leadership Training for Young Engineers and Emerging Leaders. Dean Humphrey realizes the need for leadership development and has tailored this presentation from his Maine Engineering Leadership Institute seminar. Concurrent with his presentation, a panel discussion will be held on Ownership Transition issues that will include representatives from Stantec, Wright-Pierce, James W. Sewall, and Credere LLC. It should prove to be an interesting discussion as these firms have different stories to tell: being acquired, internal transition, acquiring firms and going independent. Following these sessions, Dean Humphrey will hold a joint leadership session in which we will learn what constitutes effective teams and allows you to grade the performance of teams in your company.

The educational programs will be followed by a display of the EEA projects. Project teams will be asked to make a short presentation to engineering students (a good chance for the younger engineers who attend the leadership program to present). The engineering students will then vote for their favorite project, independent of the official EEA judging. The Luncheon and EEA presentations will be held after the student judging. After the luncheon, Professor Habib Dagher, the founder and head of the acclaimed Advanced Engineered Wood Composite Lab, will make a presentation of his work on composites. As the Lab has served as an incubator for new companies, Professor Dagher will be joined by Anthony Viselli, the onsite program manager for Maine Secure Composites, one of the lab's research products that has successfully been put into production. After this presentation, a tour of the Lab will conclude the day.

The Fall Forum will be informative and provide an excellent recruiting and leadership development opportunity. All firms are encouraged to send both young and seasoned professionals. Join the Tuesday night reception and book a room at the various hotels detailed in the Fall Forum flyer.

### **New Board Member**



Welcome to JoAnn Fryer who joined the Board of Directors as a State Director at the September meeting. JoAnn is the Branch Manager and Senior Associate for CLD Consulting Engineers, Inc. of York. She has been an active member and supporter of ACEC of Maine and we are excited to have her on the Board.

### **New Member Firm**

Since our last Newsletter the Louis Berger Group has opened an office in Portland and joined ACEC of Maine as a regular member. Their firm had been an Affiliate member as they did not have an office in Maine. Mr. Jason Gallant, PE is their official contact person.

## *ACEC of Maine Explores Advocacy Coalitions*

We have had several meetings with the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Maine to discuss joining forces on advocacy initiatives. AGC has developed a strong, focused advocacy plan and has received member contributions to establish a State PAC. They are active in engaging legislators on both sides of the aisle to develop friends of the industry. They are asking us to join them at the table to help evaluate a joint advocacy direction and assist in nurturing important relationships. While many of AGC's initiatives already match ours, we also would add our expertise in areas like water/wastewater, environmental assessment/remediation, transportation, permitting, etc. We are being asked to make a financial commitment to the coalition of \$10,000 and, more importantly, for members to become involved in the process. You will recall that we have set aside a legislative reserve in our budget, enough to cover our first-year financial commitment. The Board feels this is worthwhile investment and the best short-term means to improve our advocacy goals. We plan on participating in the coalition on a trial basis, monitoring our success with this venture along the way. Future participation and financial commitment will be evaluated and planned for during the budget process. We are confident that we can mitigate the incremental cost by re-evaluating expenses, developing non-dues revenue sources, and expanding our membership numbers, as this effort is likely to help us attract new members. If the full \$10,000 needed to be covered it would add an annual increase of about \$40 per index number, or about \$550 for a 100 person firm like Wright-Pierce, or about \$140 for a 9 person firm, like CLD Consulting Engineers. The Board believes that amount is a justifiable expense for a successful advocacy program, but our goal is to make the financial impact to members significantly less. We will continue to keep you informed as we move forward with this exciting initiative.

We also have had several meetings and discussions with the Maine State Chamber of Commerce to discuss joint advocacy. We will continue discussions with the Chamber and other potential partners in order to strengthen our advocacy efforts. We are fortunate to have one of our own, Jim Atwell of Sevee & Maher, serving as the Board Chair of the Maine State Chamber, and he has been instrumental in advancing these discussions. We are also fortunate that our involvement with Maine Tomorrow brings with it expertise, experience and contacts that have contributed positively to our work.

We need to make a commitment very soon with the AGC so we would appreciate receiving any comments and suggestions that you may have concerning this initiative. Your input will be greatly appreciated as this is an important change in our approach to advocating for our industry in Maine, from merely being reactive to issues to being proactive in bringing issues to the table.

### *PAC Check Presentations*



On August 25 Board Member Rip Patten of Credere LLC., our President John Nelson, Executive Director Paul Lariviere and Treasurer Brett Hart of James S. Sewall Co., presented a PAC check in the amount of \$3,000 to Congressman Mike Michaud to assist his reelection campaign. On August 22 a check for \$3,000 was also presented to Senator Susan Collins to assist her campaign. The presentation was made by Treasurer Brett Hart and President-elect Scott Graham, both of the James S. Sewall Company.



# The QBS Newsletter

5 MRSA 1742: Approve selection of architects and engineers. To approve the selection of architects and engineers registered in Maine in the planning, design and monitoring of construction of public improvements consistent with the policy of this State that proposals for architectural and engineering services for public improvements be publicly announced, and that contracts for architectural and engineering services be negotiated by the contracting authority on the basis of evaluation of professional competency and qualifications required for the type of services contemplated at fair and reasonable prices.

The American Institute of Architects-Maine Chapter  
The American Council of Engineering Companies of Maine  
The Maine Society of Professional Engineers

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### Successful Projects

We all like to talk about our “successful” projects but do we speak a common language. My little Webster’s Dictionary defines “successful” as *“turning out as was hoped for”* but this does not suggest who was doing the “hoping”.

If we consider that a construction project involves four basic teams: Design Team; Construction Team; Supplier Team; and Owners Team, they may not all have the same opinion of the level of success or the same methods of measurement of success. Further, “Successful” is one of those absolute terms where we seldom talk about a project being “almost successful” or “partially successful”. The project “turned out as hoped for” or it did not, based on your method of measurement.

But you might ask, what does this have to do with Qualification Based Selection? The quick answer is that the likelihood of success is improved if the “Design Team” is the one that is best qualified to undertake the project. Also, if the “Owner Team” believes they have retained the best qualified firm, the project is off to a good start as the “Owner” already has confidence that the most qualified firm has been selected. There is a marriage built on confidence and trust rather than being built on convenience or “low bid”.

The selection of the “Design Team” based on qualifications is only the first step. Qualifications and confidence must lead to the development and agreement on a “Program” that adequately defines “what is hoped for”. Unless the Design Team fully

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understands how the Owner Team expects to operate the completed facility, the needs and desires of the Owner Team and the Owner Team priorities, it may be difficult for the project to “turn out as hoped for” even with the best of Design Teams, Construction Teams, and Supplier Teams. “Hopes” must be expressed in understandable terms for them to be achieved and this alone may require extensive time, early in the process. If the Owner Team needed “de-humidification” and only got humidification, the problem may have been lack of a clear understanding of what was “hoped for”.

Although few of us like to admit it, frequently when we write our requirements, “hopes”, and needs, we may not be clear to those that read our writings. To some extent the “design and construction” process may complicate the communications because a “Programmatic Requirement” needs to be converted to a description on which someone unfamiliar with the original requirements must assign a price and someone else do the construction.

This means that the determination of “success” is greatly dependent upon “Communication Capabilities” and a clear understand of the value of these communications.