

# the news



**PHILADELPHIA SECTION  
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS**  
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The Sidney Robin Memorial Newsletter of the Philadelphia Section ASCE

## Our 94th Year

Vol. 79-4

December 2006/January 2007

### JANUARY JOINT DINNER MEETING

American Society of Civil Engineers, Philadelphia Section,  
American Society of Civil Engineers, Reading Branch, and  
American Society of Highway Engineers, Delaware Valley Section

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2007**

Radisson Hotel, Valley Forge • 1st Avenue & Gulph Road, Valley Forge, PA  
Cocktails 6:00 PM • Dinner 7:00 PM • Meeting 8:00 PM

**SUBJECT: Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Transportation and PennDOT But Were Afraid to Ask**

**SPEAKER: Rina Cutler**, Deputy Secretary of Transportation and Acting District Executive, District 6, PennDOT

RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE THROUGH DELAWARE VALLEY SECTION, ASHE. The Philadelphia Section will NOT be accepting any reservations for this meeting. Checks should NOT be sent to our Post Office Box and calls will NOT be accepted through the Section Hotline. Payment for reservations must be received at ASHE by the January 12 deadline. Those who reserve past this date and walk-ins will be charged the higher rate. Cost \$25 before **January 12, 2007** (\$20 for government employees), \$35 after January 12 and at the door.

Walk-ins will be subject to acceptance on a space-available basis. THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT SPACE WILL BE AVAILABLE IF YOU DO NOT RESERVE A SPACE.

Checks for reservations should be sent to **Delaware Valley Section ASHE, 1500 Walnut Street, Suite 1105, Philadelphia 19102**. Checks should be made to "Delaware Valley Section ASHE".

**Rina Cutler** is Deputy Secretary of Administration for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). As if this job isn't complicated enough, she was additionally appointed to serve as Acting District Executive for PennDOT Engineering District 6-0 in September 2005. District 6-0 encompasses the Greater Philadelphia Region including Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties and the City of Philadelphia. It is the most populous of PennDOT's 11 Engineering Districts and includes many of the most heavily-travelled roadways in the State. Ms. Cutler is a leader in transportation and had made an outstanding contribution to the transportation industry. She joined PennDOT as Deputy Secretary in February 2003. Her responsibilities include personnel, finance, contract administration, purchasing, information services, and the IT Program Office, the Center for Performance Excellence, the Tourism Services Office, and the Bureau of Equal Employment Opportunity. In providing these support services to the Department, she is responsible for managing resources, monitoring spending, and ensuring that management and productivity controls are in place to maximize departmental operations.

*Continued on Page 2*

### FEBRUARY JOINT DINNER MEETING

American Society of Civil Engineers, Philadelphia Section and  
New Jersey Section, South Jersey Branch, American Society of Civil Engineers

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2007**

Crowne Plaza Hotel • Route 70 and Cuthbert Raod, Cherry Hill, NJ  
Cocktails 6:00 PM • Dinner 6:30 PM • Meeting 7:30 PM

**SUBJECT: Engineers Without Borders**

**SPEAKER: Students Groups from Rowan University and Villanova University** which have undertaken Engineers Without Borders programs and efforts will give presentations on these.

More information on submission of dinner reservations will be included in the February edition of THE NEWS.

### **DON'T FORGET — SEND US YOUR SUGGESTIONS!**

A new **electronic Suggestion Box** has been established by ASCE, Philadelphia Section President **Carol Martsoff** to solicit and field good ideas from Section members for future events, programs, areas of concentration, etc. She kicked off this idea at the Spring Social in May and awaits your thoughts, comments, etc.

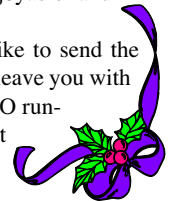
We are hopeful that you, our members, will put this tool to good use and give us feedback on things we should be focusing on, thinking about, and/or doing. Accordingly, we hope that you will send us your thoughts for consideration. These should be directed to [suggestions@asce-philly.org](mailto:suggestions@asce-philly.org).



### **HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND MERRY NEW YEAR...**

...or did we get this backward? In any event, the Officers and Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Section extend our best wishes to all Section Members, their families and friends for the best holiday season, be it Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or whatever special day or time you celebrate, and for a great 2007. As always, we hope your holiday season is full of good cheer and is safe, enjoyable and memorable!

Your Editor would also like to send the same good wishes along, and leave you with his special holiday gift of TWO run-on sentences in this segment alone!



### **SPRING SOCIAL SCHEDULED**

The **Annual Spring Social and Dinner Dance** is scheduled for **Thursday, May 10, 2007**, at the **National Constitution Center** in **Center City**. The day and location are both new. *Please mark your calendars accordingly.* More details on this event will be provided in coming issues of THE NEWS.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members and Friends,

I hope you have happy holidays and a peaceful New Year!

I hope that one of your New Year's resolutions will be to regularly attend our ASCE, Philadelphia Section meetings. The new year will start with our AWESOME joint meeting with the Delaware Valley Section of ASHE on **January 17, 2007** featuring **RINA CUTLER**, Deputy Secretary of Administration for PennDOT and District Executive of PennDOT Engineering District 6-0. Rina is incredible and you won't want to miss it!

Her topic is "Everything You Wanted to Know About Transportation but were Afraid to Ask!" Please sign up today!

Following January's event, our February meeting will feature "Engineers Without Borders." This organization has been doing incredible work throughout the world, from improving water supply systems, to water purification, to providing shelter, and many other life-saving Civil Engineering projects. Visit them at [www.ewb-usa.org](http://www.ewb-usa.org) and attend our February event to learn about this excellent organization and learn first-hand about the experiences of people who do work for the organization. EWB-USA partners with ASCE and EWB follows ASCE's Code of Ethics on all of their projects.

This time of year, when we have the holidays in December and the New Year in January, we can experience a range of emotions... and this is a giving time of year. In the spirit of the holidays and the new year, I'd like to share with you excerpts from one of my favorite writings, from the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibet, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989:

"What you wish to experience, provide for another. Look to see, now, what it is you wish to experience — in your own life, and in the world. Then see if there is another for whom you may be the source of that. If you wish to experience peace, provide peace for another. If you wish to know that you are safe, cause another to know that they are safe. If you wish to heal your own sadness or anger, seek to heal the sadness or anger of another. ...My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness."

I wish you peace and happiness in the New Year, and I hope to see you at our great event with Rina Cutler on January 17!

Sincerely,  
Carol C. Martsolf, P.E.  
President — Philadelphia Section, ASCE

## JANUARY DINNER MEETING

*Continued from Page 1*

Ms. Cutler has extensive experience in the management and operations of transportation programs. Prior to joining PennDOT, she was the Executive Director of the Philadelphia Parking Authority, Transportation Commissioner for the City of Boston, and the Director of Parking & Traffic for the City of San Francisco. She is also an active member of Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) Philadelphia Chapter, and serves on the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Standing Committee on Quality for Pennsylvania.

## DIRECTIONS TO RADISSON HOTEL VALLEY FORGE:

**From Philadelphia via I-76:** take exit 327 (Mall Blvd.) Turn right onto Mall Blvd. at the traffic signal at the end of the ramp. Turn right onto Gulph Road at the next traffic signal. Follow Gulph Road for approximately 2 miles to its intersection with 1st Avenue. The Radisson/Scanticon complex will be on your right past 1st Avenue.

**From Pennsylvania Turnpike:** from the Philadelphia/Valley Forge interchange (exit 326), follow I-76 to exit 327, the first exit past the toll plaza (Gulph Road). Bear right on the ramp onto Gulph Road. Follow Gulph Road for approximately 1 mile to its intersection with 1st Avenue. The Radisson/Scanticon complex will be on your right past 1st Avenue.

## OOPS (AGAIN?!)

Can we shed some 'daylight' on the subject?

In the article "*Historical Perspective — A History of Standard Time in the US*," in the November edition of THE NEWS, your Editor obviously demonstrated his lack of knowledge when it comes to which way the clock turns in the change from Daylight Savings Time to Standard Time. For some reason, your Editor used two examples in which, if you didn't reset your clocks, you would be late for everything.

Obviously, if you didn't "fall back" as you were supposed to do, you would be one hour EARLY for everything (that is, "obviously" to everyone except your Editor!). Surprisingly, your Editor was on time consistently after the switchover, despite his apparent confusion about which way the clock moves. (It's a good thing he knows which of Mickey's hands is the big hand and which is the other...)

Your Editor has been instructed accordingly and will not make the same mistake on March 11, 2007, when Daylight Savings Time returns, at which point he will be forced to lose one hour like the rest of us as we "spring forward". The difference is that, while the rest of us will merely lose one hour's sleep, your Editor's lost hour will serve as punishment.

**Genius without education is like silver in the mine.**

— Benj. Franklin

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## TECHNICAL GROUPS/CHAIRS

Information on the ASCE, Philadelphia Section's Technical Groups is given below. Vice President **Mark Tiger** will coordinate activities of the Groups. If you have any topics that you think would be of interest to the Groups, please feel free to pass this information along to the Group Chair.

### CONSTRUCTION

Dennis MacBride  
SEPTA  
1234 Market Street, 12th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
215-580-3404

### DELAWARE VALLEY GEOINSTITUTE

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515 Grove Street, Suite 2C  
Haddon Heights, NJ 08035-1756  
856-547-0505 ext. 3416

### ENGINEERING MANAGEMENT

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Philadelphia, PA 19107  
215-656-6583

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215-222-3000

### STRUCTURAL

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Philadelphia, PA 19106  
215-922-8080

## RUN, CAROL, RUN!

ASCE, Philadelphia Section President **Carol Martsoff** was one of over 12,000 runners in the Philadelphia Marathon, held on November 19, 2006. Carol has been in training for this for quite a while but it was her first marathon.

We are proud to report that Carol finished, right in the middle of the pack, at 6013th place, with a respectable time of 5 hours, 42 minutes and 38 seconds.

We are also proud to note that, as far as we know, none of this time was spent on local subways, as one infamous Rosie Ruiz did a few years ago in the Boston Marathon.

**They that will not be counseled, cannot be helped. If you do not hear reason, she will rap you on the knuckles.**

— *Benj. Franklin*

## TENTATIVE MEETING SCHEDULE — 2006-07 SEASON

Your ASCE, Philadelphia Section's Board of Directors is busily assembling an interesting meeting schedule for this season. While all details of this schedule remain to be fully developed, we have provided this information for your planning and advance notice. This information will be updated in each edition of THE NEWS as well as on the Section website.

For purposes of marking your calendar, coming meetings are scheduled as follows:

**Thursday, March 8, 2007**

**University of Pennsylvania Capital/Expansion Program; Amy Gutmann, University President;** Joint meeting with Women's Transportation Seminar, Philadelphia Chapter; Mid-Atlantic Section, Institute of Transportation Engineers; and Engineers Club of Philadelphia • Union League, Philadelphia, PA

**Thursday, April 12, 2007**

**Comcast Building, Project Team;** Joint meeting with Engineers Club of Philadelphia • Union League, Phila., PA

**Thursday, May 10, 2007**

**Annual Spring Social/Dinner Dance • National Constitution Center, Philadelphia, PA**

## YOUNGER MEMBER FORUM NEWS

*By Fred Vesce, Forum Editor*

**John Federico**, Forum President 2006-07

Urban Engineers, Inc.  
530 Walnut Street, 14th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
(215) 922-8080  
jefederico@urbanengineers.com

### YMF Member Spotlight Tze-Wei Choo, E.I.T.

Miss Choo is currently working as a Bridge Engineer with Pennoni Associates, in their Philadelphia office. Prior to Pennoni, she worked with McCormick, Taylor and Associates for approximately 3 years.

Since graduating with a Masters degree from Penn State, she published a journal paper entitled: *Response of a continuous, skewed, steel bridge during deck placement in the Journal of Constructional Steel Research*. She was also invited to review a technical article for the ASCE journal of *Bridge Engineering*. Besides being active in engineering related activities, she enjoys an array of sports such as flag football, swimming and golfing. Her weekend hobbies include pottery, reading and cooking.

### YMF Happenings

The highly anticipated YMF Winter Social is almost upon us. On **Wednesday, January 31, 2007** the YMF will host its **11th annual Winter Social** at the **Independence Brew Pub**. In recent years the event outgrew McGillin's Olde Ale House and needs a larger venue. To RSVP, or for more information, visit the YMF events page at <http://www.ymfphilly.org/events>.

Manayunk is a Native American word for "where we go to drink." That is where the YMF went on December 6, 2006 during their most recent happy hour event. More than 30 folks gathered at Kildare's Irish Pub for some "Craic", a Celtic word for "drinking, a lot." Thanks go out to the YMF for sponsoring the event, and Social Chairs **Cathy Golata** and **Sheri Miller** for organizing the event.

The **Wissahickon Restoration Volunteer** group (WRV) hosted the YMF on Saturday, December 2, 2006. This was the YMF's first

community outreach event this year. A half a dozen YMF members helped clear invasive trees and vines from a section of Wissahickon Park near Henry Lane. Thanks go to **Steve Gault**, our **Community Outreach Chair**, for organizing our group and coordinating with the WRV.

A **Scavenger Hunt** brought more than 25 Engineering students from **Drexel, Temple, Swarthmore, Rowan, and Widener** to compete in this inaugural ASCE, Phila. Section event. Student teams, each containing a YMF member, searched Old City, Philadelphia for items related to Civil Engineering. Afterwards, the students and members convened at Buffalo Billiards to tally up the scores and crown the winners of the event: the **Drexel Men's Team**. Thanks to all the YMF members who participated, to the ASCE for providing appetizers, and to **Dave Hanly** for putting together a great collection of items to find.

You can learn more about upcoming Philadelphia Section YMF events at our website <http://www.ymfphilly.org/events>.

### College Chapter Meetings

Members of the YMF visited local universities to talk to students during their chapter meetings. They visited their alma maters at Temple University in mid-December and Villanova University on **December 12, 2006**. The members spoke to the students about different aspects of the Engineering profession, including building/structural, site design, bridges, highways, traffic etc. Thanks go to **Tze-Wei Choo** and **Shivani Mahajan** for coordinating these events. Future meetings with Widener, Drexel, Rowan, and Swarthmore Student chapters are being planned. If you would like to volunteer, please contact **Tze-Wei** at [tchoo@pennoni.com](mailto:tchoo@pennoni.com) as soon as possible.

### Extra!

The YMF Board member page is now complete [www.ymfphilly.org/directory.htm](http://www.ymfphilly.org/directory.htm). After viewing the directory, you will know more about each Board Member and be able to recognize them during ASCE, Phila. Section events. On a side note, the ASCE Section Board of Directors page still has "pictures coming soon" ([www.asce-philly.org](http://www.asce-philly.org)). Click on Board of Directors).

## PHILADELPHIA SECTION 2007 AWARDS PROGRAM

### NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN!

The ASCE, Philadelphia Section's Awards Program for 2007 is now open for nominations. These Awards recognize Section members and others for their contributions to the Civil Engineering profession. All Awards will be presented at the **Spring Social/Dinner Dance**, which will be conducted on **Thursday, May 10, 2007** at the **National Constitution Center**. (More information on the Spring Social will be included in upcoming issues of The News.)

### GUIDELINES/RULES

- Nominations must be postmarked by **Friday, February 2, 2007**, or faxed to the Awards Committee Chair by the close of business that day. Nominations should be submitted on nomination forms which are available from the Committee Chair.
- Individuals may be nominated for awards by a member in any grade of membership.
- Individuals may receive only one award in a single year, but may be nominated for more than one award in a single year.
- Award recipients are subject to the approval of the Section's Board of Directors.
- All awards are presented only in years in which, in the judgement of the Selection Committee or the Board, there is at least one suitable candidate.
- The Selection Committee, at its discretion, may nominate an alternate for each Award for Board consideration.
- The Selection Committee will recommend to the Board whether the recipient should also be

nominated for applicable National or Regional awards by the Section.

- A nominee for any award **MUST** be a member in good standing of the Philadelphia Section in the year in which the nomination is made, with two exceptions (Government Service Award and Philadelphia History and Heritage Award). For these awards, membership in the Philadelphia Section is **NOT** required.

### AWARDS

The Section has a total of 13 awards which cover various specialty areas. In addition, the Section President can nominate an individual for the Presidential Award at his/her discretion. The awards are as follows:

- Philadelphia Civil Engineer of the Year
- Philadelphia Young Civil Engineer of the Year
- Philadelphia Government Engineer of the Year
- Philadelphia Young Government Engineer of the Year
- Government Service Award
- Educator of the Year
- Philadelphia History and Heritage Award

### Individual Technical Awards:

- Civil Engineering Manager of the Year
- Construction Engineer of the Year
- Geotechnical Engineer of the Year
- Structural Engineer of the Year
- Transportation Engineer of the Year
- Water Resources Engineer of the Year

If you are interested in submitting a nomination for consideration, please contact **Bob Wright**, Committee Chair, at via e-mail at **newseditor@asce-philly.org** to obtain a nomination form. You may also call Bob if you have any questions or need any additional information on the Section Awards Program.

## PLEASE CHECK YOUR MAILING ADDRESS

We receive several returned copies of THE NEWS each mailing. The usual reason for the return is insufficient mailing address.

As you renew your ASCE dues, please check your preferred mailing address for correctness. In order to have your mail delivered to you, your address needs to be as complete as possible — if you work in an office building or complex, the street address AND the office/floor/suite number needs to be included.

You can also check your information on ASCE's database at any time through National's website (**www.asce.org**) in the Member Profile section. You may need to establish a username and password for your account to do this, if you have not previously done so.

Another option remains: our e-mail service which will get THE NEWS to your computer literally "hot off the presses." This option is available to all Section members. Please send your information to us at **info@asce-philly.org** to start receipt of THE NEWS via e-mail.

We appreciate your cooperation on this to ensure that THE NEWS and other ASCE mailings find you efficiently and quickly.

## PA PE'S WILL NEED PDH'S AND CEU'S

On **November 29, 2006**, Governor Rendell signed **Senate Bill 655**, sponsored by **Senator Roger Madigan**. The bill requires the registration board to adopt regulations establishing requirements for 24 hours continuing education (CE) for licensees under the Engineer, Land Surveyor and Geologist Registration Act as a condition for biennial renewal. The first licensure period that will require CE will be determined by the regulations.

Regulations must be promulgated within 18 months of the effective date of the act. The effective date of the act is **January 28, 2007**, which means that regulations must be completed before **August 2008**.

Licensees are exempt from CE for the licensure period immediately following initial licensure. The Board may waive all or part of the requirements for serious illness, military service or demonstrated hardship.

The law requires that the Board approve courses, and it specifically excludes courses in "practice building and office management."

To view a copy of Senate Bill 655, go to **http://tinyurl.com/yzv8r**.

*Continued on Page 6*

## ASCE, PHILA. SECTION 2006 SALARY & BENEFITS SURVEY

In May 2006, you were asked to complete the biennial ASCE Salary and Benefits Survey. As you probably know, the Section conducts this Survey every two years to track the trends of our local salary/benefit situation. The 2006 Survey was sent to the Section members as an insert in THE NEWS and by e-mail. We received 76 handwritten surveys and 10 electronic files for a total of 86 responses.

The median age of the respondents was 50, up from 45 in the 2004 survey. The median for full-time employment was 25 years, up from 22 years. The median salary is \$106,000, up from \$89,000 in 2005. 91 percent of the respondents have been licensed Professional Engineers for 14 years. (*And, once again, your Editor finds out he's just an average guy... surprisingly, he's very close to the average in each of the categories! – Ed.*)

There was a slight decrease in female membership, down from 12% to 10%. More than two-thirds of the respondents work for Consultants with 48% of the respondents employed in the City of Philadelphia. Fifty-eight of the respondents drive to work with the median commute time being 45 minutes.

Sixty-two percent of the respondents believe that it would be "easy" or "very easy" to find a new job. This is a decrease from 52% in 2004 but less than the 77% reported in 2000. Finally, 85% of the respondents said that, if given a second chance, they would still be a Civil Engineer. This is an increase from 73% and 76% in the previous two biennial surveys.

Thanks to all of the ASCE members who took the time to respond to this year's survey. Your participation is important for evaluating our careers and the state of the Civil Engineering profession. If you have any questions, comments, or observations on this survey, feel free to contact me at **(215) 922-8080**, or email at **bastover@urbanengineers.com**.

Brian A. Stover, PE

*(Editor's note — The Section thanks **Dennis MacBride** for his many, dedicated years in handling the Survey prior to this one and Brian Stover for taking it on this time.)*

## MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

### PRESIDENT FEDERICO WINS RECOGNITION

Younger Member Forum President **John Federico** recently won First Place for this year's Scholarship Award competition sponsored by the Pennsylvania Planning Association (PPA). This competition is conducted among participating planning graduates in the Philadelphia region. John's thesis was a case study on what can be done to improve Penn's Landing, and he was up against formidable entries from Temple-Ambler, Penn, and West Chester. The projects were evaluated based on subject quality, creativity, structure, technical writing, research, and originality. The award was presented to John at the annual PPA social event on **October 5, 2006** at City Hall. *Congratulations, John!*

## AND THE REPORT SAID...

As promised by Deputy Secretary of Transportation for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, **Karen Rae**, at her presentation at our November meeting, the State's Transportation Funding and Reform Commission (TFRC) issued its anxiously-awaited report on November 13, 2006. The results are given here in limited detail and are fairly consistent with what Deputy Secretary Rae reported at our meeting.

In its response to what it describes as the State's "inadequate and dysfunctional" current funding sources for mass transit, TFRC recommended that a permanent funding source be created. At present, there are various funding methods and sources in place, but these are confusing and have not always worked the way they were originally planned. For example, a tax on private utility company receipts has not brought the desired results as higher fuel costs have decreased these companies' profits. The Commission would prefer a switch in efforts to pursue a dedicated fixed percentage of sales tax and/or personal income tax which would be directed to transit. Unlike other present sources, these would provide increased funding as tax receipts increase.

An additional \$760 million per year would be provided to transit agencies around the State, with 75 percent of this amount coming from State resources matched by 25 percent from local governments and agencies. The State share would be borne primarily from the real estate transfer tax, which would increase from 1 percent to 1.89 percent. Local governments would be permitted to use one of several options to raise their share, including sales tax, realty transfer tax, and earned-income/wage tax. In densely-populated areas where transit needs are the most pressing, the use of real estate-based levies are viewed as effective since property values tend to be higher in these areas.

As many of us are painfully aware, Pennsylvania is one of only a handful of states that has no dedicated funding stream for mass transit. Despite the fact that each and every one of its 67 counties has some form of transit and it has been a leader in the provision of free/discounted fares for senior citizens and disabled riders, the State has consistently avoided the long-term funding issues of its transit agencies, to the extent that transit fares on SEPTA and Port Authority Transit (Pittsburgh) are among the nation's highest. Part of this is attributable to the "two Pennsylvanias" that exist — the major metropolitan centers and the rural areas (Pennsylvania has the largest rural population of any state), which often pit transit and highway needs against each other rather than viewing them as a singular matter.

On the highway/bridge side, similar needs for significant increases in funding were noted by TFRC. New funding totaling \$900 million per year would be targeted toward this State-maintained infrastructure, with \$750 million of

this coming from an 11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-cent per gallon increase in the liquid fuels (gasoline) tax and \$150 million from increased vehicle registration and driver's licensing fees. An additional 1-cent per gallon levy on liquid fuels would be directed to local governments for improvements on city-, county-, and township-maintained roadways and bridge structures.

TFRC admitted that higher taxes would require legislative commitment and "intestinal fortitude" and noted that gas tax increases in particular have never been popular with the State's electorate. Governor Rendell may have new "sway" with the Legislature and the mindsets of newly-elected members, and with none of the states 50 senators and 203 representatives up for re-election until 2008, this may give tax hikes some chance. Rendell recognizes the need for the creation of a consistent long-term mechanism which will fully address the State's transit and highway needs and has stated that this goal is a high priority in his second term, for which he will use the Commission's reports as guidance.

Locally, TFRC focused on SEPTA's Board and its skewed representation, with each member county in the five-county metropolitan region having two Board members even though Philadelphia has over three-quarters of the overall SEPTA ridership and contributes the lion's share of the counties' portion of SEPTA's budget. The Commission observed that this situation particularly, in its words, "deserves reconsideration both in terms of the proportional representation issues raised as well as its overall size." Any change in this would no doubt require action to be initiated by the Board itself, thus no immediate changes are anticipated.

The 157-page report and findings can be reviewed in detail on the website, <ftp://ftp.dot.state.pa.us/public/pdf/TFRCFinalReport.pdf>. *Happy reading!*

Thanks to the above website and to the December 2006 edition of *Cinders*, the newsletter of the Philadelphia Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, for information used in this article.

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## THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS — AND WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE ONE?

The ASCE, Phila. Section is continuing our successful Sponsorship Program this season. Thus far, 35 firms have opted to participate for the current season. As always, the Section extends its collective "thank you" to our sponsors for their commitment and continued support of the Section.

There are several benefits available to you as a Section Sponsor. For a low \$300 annual fee, you too can be a part of this program and have your business card appear in each edition of THE NEWS. Your logo will appear on a "thank you" board on display at each main Section meeting. Your firm will be listed as a Section sponsor in

## 2007 ENGINEERS WEEK — COMIN' UP SOON!

**Engineers Week 2007** is scheduled to start on **Friday, February 16, 2007** and will run through **Saturday, February 24, 2007**. As you may be aware, Engineers Week is held in February each year to highlight the birthday of our nation's first president, George Washington, who supported extensive engineering and surveying activities throughout his military service. It is a time during which various engineering accomplishments throughout the nation are cited and honored.

Locally, Engineers Week programs have been held since 1953, and these include the selection of the Delaware Valley Engineer of the Year, the Delaware Valley Young Engineer of the Year, and other honors. Activities will kick off with the Proclamation Luncheon at the Loews Hotel in Center City Philadelphia on **Friday, February 16**. The 2007 Delaware Valley Engineer of the Year, **Joseph Viscuso**, will preside as the guest of honor.

The 2007 **Delaware Valley Young Engineer of the Year** dinner is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 21**, at the **McCall Country Club** in Upper Darby. The incoming Young Engineer of the Year, to be determined, will be honored, along with all candidates nominated for this award.

The culmination of the Week's events, the **Engineers Week Banquet**, will take place at **Rowan University** in Glassboro, New Jersey, on **Saturday, February 24, 2007**. Numerous award winners and projects will be recognized, including the Engineer of the Year, the Young Engineer of the Year, the Outstanding Engineering Achievements in the Delaware Valley, the Outstanding Math Teachers, Student Paper Contest winners, Scholarship recipients, and the winners of the local Future City Competition.

Please consult the Delaware Valley Engineers Week Council's website, [www.dvewc.org](http://www.dvewc.org), for more details and information on prices and reservations for these events.

The ASCE, Philadelphia Section is well represented on the Delaware Valley Engineers Week Council, which coordinates Engineers Week activities locally.

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the program for our annual Spring Social/Dinner Dance. You will also be able to post two employment ads on the Section website free of charge for the duration of the season.

You may have seen the cards of those who have decided to become Section Sponsors for the current season in THE NEWS. The format of this has changed slightly this year, with pages 7 and 8 of each edition of THE NEWS reserved as our Sponsors' Pages. (And this has been so successful, we've had to "appropriate" part of page 6 for the overflow!)

If your firm is not in this esteemed group, and you would like to become a sponsor, this is the time to consider it. For more information on the program, please contact our **Editor, Bob Wright** at [newseditor@asce-philly.org](mailto:newseditor@asce-philly.org).

## NOVEMBER DINNER MEETING

Thursday, November 2, 2006

Union League, Philadelphia PA

### Update on the Transportation Funding Reform Commission

by Robert Wright, Editor

A lively crowd of over 110 attendees turned out for the ASCE, Philadelphia Section's November meeting to hear the latest on a subject near and dear to many of us — transportation funding. While this does exist — and many of us have had sightings of it here and there — we have found that, despite federal initiatives such as SAFETEA-LU and other well-intended efforts, actual funding is not always easy to find. Those in attendance were hoping to hear more about how to find and use this scarce commodity.

Section President **Carol Martsoff** opened the meeting and managed to get the restless crowd away from the bar and into their seats, as Membership Secretary **Tom Brady** ably filled in for the missing **Ruben David** and delivered the evening's prayer. President Martsoff announced that it was **Drexel University** night and, after a show of hands of current students and alumni (once some of the alumni had to be reminded to raise their hands for this — we're taking their Drexel educations into account for this!), Drexel Student Chapter President **Jon Miller** came to the podium to update the crowd on the Chapter's current activities.

President Martsoff welcomed Younger Member Forum President **John Federico** to the podium for his status report on upcoming Forum events. (Details on these events are presented in the Younger Member Forum article elsewhere in this edition.)

Following this, President Martsoff introduced the evening's featured speaker, **Karen Rae**, Deputy Secretary for Local and Area Transportation of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. Ms. Rae presented some background on the Transportation Funding and Reform Commission (TFRC), which was formed and directed to examine the funding crisis plaguing Pennsylvania's highway, bridge and transit systems. The TFRC has produced a preliminary report with its findings and is now seeking input before it fashions a final report in mid-November.

#### "The Commission"

Ms. Rae explained that the TFRC was created by an Executive Order by Governor Rendell in July 2005. There are nine members on the TFRC, which is chaired by Secretary of Transportation Allen Biehler. The Commission held a kickoff meeting shortly after its formation and began its investigations into the areas of public transit and highway/bridge infrastructure. In both of these areas, funding for system preservation and expansion is inadequate and creative financing methods need to be explored to maintain a guaranteed, continual source of needed dollars.

Ms. Rae noted that the TFRC had four basic guiding principles. First, transportation must be integrated with land use and economic develop-

ment, as well as environmental policies, programs and goals. Second, as noted, funding sources need to be reliable, dedicated, inflation-sensitive, and reactive to changing environmental factors. Third, stringent criteria for capacity increases, especially on the highway/bridge "side," had to be set. Lastly, funding levels, structures and distribution need to be responsive to performance needs.

#### Why We Think Funding is a Scarce Resource!

In her accompanying slides, Ms. Rae highlighted the current problems faced in Pennsylvania. For public transit, resources have been outstripped by funds by \$240 million per year over the last 15 years. Much of this is attributable to the lack of a stable, dedicated funding source for transit. Although several Acts of the Legislature have focused on specific taxes to fund transit, these have been inadequate. There are additionally constitutional restrictions on the use of the State's liquid fuels (gas) tax for anything but highways.

Ms. Rae added that transit agencies serve each of Pennsylvania's 67 counties, which is fairly unique among US states, so the issue is not the typical urban-versus-rural one that it is thought to be. In the larger metropolitan areas, the transit operators serve a higher percentage of to/from work trips, while the operators in the smaller areas tend to have more usefulness to those who cannot or decide not to drive, i.e. school students and senior citizens. The TFRC audited seven transit agencies statewide to see what the needs actually were and how help could be applied. SEPTA is unusually complex with a large board structure, which has transformed many transportation decisions into political ones. Because of the nature of our region, 80% of the SEPTA Board represents the four suburban counties which constitute only 20% of the system ridership.

The diverse needs of the transit authorities is also a major factor, as Ms. Rae highlighted. SEPTA and Port Authority Transit, which serves Pittsburgh, have significant infrastructure needs to support extensive metropolitan rail systems (in SEPTA's case, both light and heavy rail as well as regional rail, while Pittsburgh has a sprawling light rail system with a downtown subway). The other operators tend to be bus systems which serve large geographic areas with low-density population.

#### The Highway/Bridge Story

In the "traditional" (highway/bridge) infrastructure category, Ms. Rae explained that, despite its reputation for getting more than its fair share of federal highway funds, Pennsylvania is now lagging behind other states in this. There is currently a \$155 million per year gap between needs and resources. The gas tax is

a possible solution for this, but, obviously, any increase faces the political will to support it. While the gas tax has been increased, there has tended to be a voter backlash, so this remains politically unpopular.

The Commission conducted public meetings statewide in 6 locations in September to present its findings. Nearly 200 citizens commented on the draft report. These comments will be folded into the final report due in November, about two weeks after this meeting. Ms. Rae apologized that, accordingly, she could not comment on the final report, but urged those interested to visit the website to review it ([www.dot.state.pa.us/tfrc](http://www.dot.state.pa.us/tfrc)).

A short question and answer period followed.

## PDHs and CEUs

Continued from Page 4

This means that Pennsylvania joins a growing list of states that require continuing professional development (CPD) as a condition of license renewal. While there is still some time before the regulations are finalized and adopted, those of us who are registered professionals will need to consider how we can get CPD. This often comes in the form of Professional Development Hours (PDH's) and Continuing Education Units (CEU's). Many short courses offer one or the other, and ASCE National sponsors many of these on a range of topics.

Additionally, did you know that attendance at a technical meeting, such as a Section meeting or a Technical Group presentation, is worth at least 1 PDH? (Before you extend this logically, no, the YMF Social is NOT something that will get you any PDH's!)

Thanks to **George Willis** of Urban Engineers for the "heads up" on Senate Bill 655.

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## COMING NEXT ISSUE...

- More information on the February and March meetings
- Updated meeting schedule
- Reports on the December and January Section meetings

Look for this in the February edition of THE NEWS, coming in late January.