



## EVENT CALENDAR:

### February

11th - Geotechnical Group Meeting (With UNO Student Chapter) - Omaha

12th - Geotechnical Seminar GEO-Omaha 2010 - Omaha

### March

Environmental Group Meeting

## ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

From The President

"Bounty Offered to Sections for Peer Review Referrals

Future City - Regional Competition

Geotechnical Seminar

January Water Resources Meeting Summary

Annual E-Week Banquet

February 2010

## PRESENTING

### The Geotechnical Group Presents:

*"Echoes of the Future"*

Thursday, February 11th

**Featuring: John Bachner**, Bachner Communications, Inc. and ASFE / The Geoprofessional Business Association

John Bachner is well-known in several "worlds," especially that of design and other technical professionals, where he serves as a consultant, instructor, lecturer, speaker, and thorn in the collective side of a group he holds in high esteem. His specialties include management in general; risk management in particular; effective writing; public relations, advertising, and other forms of marketing communication; selling; and leadership, among a variety of others.

John is the founder and CEO of Bachner Communications, Inc. (BCI), a firm that provides a variety of services based upon John's areas of interest. Association management is a BCI service that embraces many of these interest areas and, since May 1, 1973, BCI has provided association management services to ASFE/ The Best People on Earth, a not-for-profit association of geoprofessional firms that encourages its member firms and their employees to "prosper through professionalism." Since the start, John has been BCI's designated "point person" for the ASFE account, serving consistently as the group's chief staff executive.

**Location: Anthony's Steak House**  
7220 F Street, Omaha NE 68127

<b>Times:</b>	Social Hour	5:30
	Dinner	6:30
	Presentation	7:30

<b>Menu:</b>	Baked Salmon (8 oz)	\$25
	Chop Loin Marsala	\$25
	Top Sirloin (12 oz)	\$28

Spouses and guests are welcome. Price is \$10 without the meal. Student meals are FREE. Register online by 12 PM Tuesday, February 9th at [www.neasce.org/meal\\_signup](http://www.neasce.org/meal_signup).

Deadline for articles to be published in the March newsletter will be March 1st. Email articles to Aaron Grote at [editor@neasce.org](mailto:editor@neasce.org)

2008-2009  
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## From the President

### - John Hill, P.E.



*John Hill, P.E. President of ASCE*

Hello again to my fellow Nebraska Section Members! This starts my busiest time of the year and I hope that everyone is keeping busy as well.

Last Newsletter I talked about registering our conference attendees and collecting the registration fees over the internet. Well the site is up and running, and after a few days of confusion and getting our bank account set up correctly, we are getting participants to sign up for the conference. It has really been a learning experience, but overall positive. As of the time I am writing this letter, we have 85 people signed up for the conference. With luck we'll skip the annual blizzard on the 12th of February and conference will once again be a huge success. Be sure to sign up for the Geo-Omaha 2010 through our website, [www.neasce.org](http://www.neasce.org).

This month has E-Week and all the activities that go along with it. ASCE is the sponsoring Society for E-Week this year, and our Section is responsible for helping provide for the activities. The E-Week banquet is at the Strategic Air and Space Museum this year and each of the Societies or Engineering firms will be allowed to have their displays set up for the entire week. Along with the E-Week activities is the Annual Truss

Bustin' Competition. I could use an Engineer for the helping with the judging on Monday, February 15, and I will send a Section wide call for helpers to break trusses on Saturday, February 20. In addition to the Omaha schools, we may have a Lincoln school participate. Times to help will be from noon to 5:00 PM.

The next change we have worked on for our Section is to get all of our monthly meeting signups to be done online. I worked to get it ready for this month's meeting and, just in time, it's now up and running. I will say this may be a work in progress as it evolves to better serve our members. Please let me know your comments on bugs or improvements to be made to make the site better. This site was developed for NE-ASCE by an UNL Civil Engineering student, my son David, and I would like to express my appreciation to him

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for doing this site. It is expected to make the work of the Vice President much easier and can help keep the organizer of the Monthly Meeting more informed of the expected attendees and meal choices. Sign up at [www.neasce.org/meal\\_signup](http://www.neasce.org/meal_signup).

Lastly, I want to say thank to everyone that responded to my request for help for Russell Middle School 7th Grade Engineering Seminar. There was a good response from the members and we resolved the matter quickly. Keep up the volunteering!

I hope to see you at the February Meeting!

Dates to Remember

- \* February 11 – Geotechnical Meeting (With UNO Student Chapter)
- \* February 12 – Geotechnical Conference
- \* February 18 – E-Week Banquet, ASCE NE Section is the host.

## January Meeting Hosted by the Water Resources Group

Thanks to the water resources group and the UNL-Student chapter for hosting the January Meeting. The list below can be considered official documentation of attendances at the January meeting worth 1 PDH credit.

- |                |                      |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Mike Sklenar   | Simone Rock          |
| Paul Dierking  | Matt McConville      |
| John Hill      | Lianna Lau           |
| Bret Daugherty | Pat Engerbert        |
| John Cambrali  | Rajat Jas            |
| David Kracman  | Loras Klostermann    |
| Bill Arneson   | Laurie Cariette Zook |
| Dennis Gilbert | Abby Nelson          |
| Steve Nickel   | Pat Douse            |
| Dave Adeneral  |                      |

## “Bounty” Offered to Sections for Peer Review Referrals

The Committee on Peer Review for Public Agencies is introducing a \$250 incentive for referrals that result in a peer review.

### What is Peer Review?

The purpose of ASCE’s Peer Review for Public Agencies Program is to help public sector engineering and construction agencies improve the management and quality of their engineering services through a quick, confidential, and affordable process. Reviewers study an organization’s policies and objectives and conduct staff interviews to determine how well those policies and procedures are understood and practiced. Management areas covered include: organizational management, project management, emergency management, technical procedures, human resource management, finance, and public relations. The focus may cover planning, design, construction, operations, and maintenance -- and can include an entire agency or just a portion. The team concludes the process with an oral report to the engineer/director requesting the review, and if requested follows up later with a written report.

The process was modeled after a similar one used by the American Council of Engineering Companies in the late 1980’s. Since 1987, almost 70 different local entities have benefitted from the ASCE Peer Review for Public Agencies program. Typical comments include “We were and still are very happy with the review that was performed.” and “Experience showed and was very valuable.” More information, including a brochure, is available on the ASCE Web site at [http://www.asce.org/professional/peereview/peer\\_review.cfm](http://www.asce.org/professional/peereview/peer_review.cfm).

ASCE Peer Review is a voluntary and confidential program for public infrastructure organizations and is conducted by experienced government engineer/managers who are trained in the process. Timing is typically controlled by the requesting agency. A review can be done quickly. The turnaround time can be within 90 days of the request. Cost is low for this kind of study since reviewers volunteer their time, and therefore no cost is included for their salaries.

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The fee covers reviewer travel costs and administration. It typically ranges from \$6,000 to \$20,000 but depends on the size of the agency being reviewed and whether the agency requests a more customized review to address specific challenges or opportunities that they are facing.

### **Benefits of a Peer Review**

A peer review provides an objective outside assessment of strengths and weaknesses by fellow government engineers experienced in leadership and management. They have no stake in future work; their intent is to provide a useful service to colleagues. Agency management can gain insights into procedural difficulties, communication obstacles, organizational problems, and employee morale but also positive reinforcement from staff feedback. This helps them prioritize and implement suggestions for improvement of effectiveness in a manner that utilizes both staff and management input.

### **Incentive process**

Sections and Branches should email Becky Waldrup, ASCE's staff contact for the Committee on Peer Review for Public Agencies, at [rwaldrup@asce.org](mailto:rwaldrup@asce.org) to recommend an agency. Provide the following information:

1. ASCE Section or Branch name and contact, and
2. Government agency name and contact information.

Becky will acknowledge your submission, enter the contact information into ASCE's Peer Review tracking system, and follow-up with the agency to determine their interest. Upon completion of a review and payment of the review fee, the 'nominating' Section or Branch will receive payment of \$250. There is no limit on the number of referrals that a Sections and Branches may make or the number of referral fees that they may earn.

Agencies who have used this service have found that the process is very valuable. The Committee on Peer Review for Public Agencies hopes that this incentive offer will increase the exposure of this service. Please consider participating in the referral program for the benefit of your local public agencies as well as for the financial assistance that it will provide to your Section or Branch.

## **Become a Key Contact**

Are you interested in knowing what the 111th Congress is up to? Join the Key Contacts Program - ASCE's grassroots advocacy program. You will receive email about public policy issues important to our profession and learn how to interact with our elected leaders. See [www.asce.org/keycontacts](http://www.asce.org/keycontacts) for more information and to sign up.

## **January Water Resources Meeting Summary**

Over 50 people attended a dinner meeting co-hosted by the Nebraska Section's Water Resources Technical Group and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's ASCE Student Chapter on January 14th, 2010. A great mixture of professionals, guests, and students turned out, on what most agreed was one of the warmest (relatively) evenings in recent memory for the January section meeting.

The meeting provided a great opportunity for students and professionals to network and learn about UNL's student chapter activities and current water issues within the state of Nebraska. The UNL Student Chapter President, Garrett Hummel, and Vice-President, Tom Dowse, opened the meeting with a brief presentation introducing the officers and highlighting past and future activities. The Nebraska Section presented a check to the student chapter to help support their upcoming Steel Bridge and Concrete Canoe competitions. Following the student chapter's presentation, Brian Dunnigan, Director of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, provided a general overview of the DNR and its role in managing statewide water resources. Other topics discussed by Mr. Dunnigan included coordination with bordering states (Wyoming, Colorado, and Kansas), as well as present and future issues relating to water use, irrigation, and basin appropriations. The meeting was held at Othmer Hall on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus. Thanks to all who attended!

## Future City – Regional Competition

Galileus.... This is the name chosen by a group of students from Elkhorn Ridge Middle School for their "Future City". This group of students were the winners of the Heartland Regional Future City® competition which took place on January 16, 2010. As a reward for winning the Regional Competition, the students will now travel to Washington D.C. to compete in the 18th Annual Future City National Finals which will take place February 13-17, 2010. The winning students teamed up with their teacher, Ms. Jennifer Hoffman, and their volunteer engineer-mentor, Diane Jones.

The winning city, Galileus, demonstrated creativity of design and futuristic concepts while at the same time trying to sustain a green building-design approach in their model. One of the key features of this city is the Astropolis Arena, where citizens can watch the latest Spaceball match and see space explorations around the galaxy!!!

The runners-up for the Heartland Region Future City competition included:

- Second place school: Elkhorn Middle School – City's name: DURA
- Third place school: Arlington Public Schools – City's name: Aguania

For the competition, students are required to create a city model using SimCity, construct a three dimensional model to scale, give a presentation before a panel of engineer judges, and write a 700-1000 word essay describing their city. This year's topic was "Providing an Affordable Living Space for People Who Have Lost Their Home Due to a Disaster or Financial Emergency."

We want to congratulate all of the members of the Galileus team and wish them the best of luck at the upcoming national competition.

Thank you to all of the Nebraska Section members who participated as mentors, judges, and volunteers to help make the regional competition a success. A special thank you also goes out to Mr. John Thomsen, the Heartland Future City Coordinator



Elkhorn Ridge Students and their city Galileus

## Salute Civil Engineering at the 2010 OPAL Gala

The most glamorous night on the civil engineering calendar is coming March 25 to Washington, D.C. -- ASCE's OPAL Gala. Come to the nation's capital this spring to honor outstanding civil engineers and amazing infrastructure projects. Be on hand for the announcement of the world's Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement for 2010 after learning what made each nominee worthy. Join in the ovations for several of civil engineering's greatest practitioners as they receive Outstanding Projects And Leaders awards and other ASCE honors. Find out about the OPAL winners and OCEA nominees. Get your tuxedo or evening gown ready for a night of great tributes to civil engineering -- register today.

## Geotechnical Seminar

The Annual Geotechnical Seminar GEO-Omaha 2010 is Friday, February 12, 2010 at the Scott Conference Center in Omaha. Register online at [www.neasce.org](http://www.neasce.org) and click on the GeoOmaha registration link. The fee is \$180.00 with proceeds benefitting the ASCE funded Peck/Benak Engineering Achievement Scholarship, the Future City Competition, and local ASCE Student Section.

# Save the Date!

## ANNUAL E-WEEK BANQUET THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2010

Sponsored by the Engineer's Roundtable  
0.1 Continuing Education Units (CEU) or  
1.0 Professional Development Hours (PDH) available

***Banquet Location:***  
Strategic Air and Space Museum  
28210 West Park Highway  
Ashland, NE 68003

6:00 PM – Social Hour (Cash Bar)  
7:00 PM – Banquet & Speaker

**LOOK FOR THE SIGN-UP FLYER WITH  
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SOON!**

Engineers Roundtable website:  
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