

JULY 2009 MEETING:
Poly Canyon Village Complex & Tour

TOPIC:

In case you missed it, here are the 2009 ASCE SLO Branch Award winners:

- Outstanding Younger Civil Engineer
Judd King, P.E.
- Outstanding Practitioner Advisor
Kari Wagner, P.E.
- Outstanding CE in Government
Glenn Marshall, P.E.
- Outstanding Private Project
Left Turn Channelization – Harmony
- Outstanding Government Project
River Bend Park Bikeway – Lompoc
- Outstanding Sustainability Project
Poly Canyon Village – Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
- Outstanding Architectural Engineering Project:
Santa Maria Library – Santa Maria

The Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement Award winner was Poly Canyon Village, the subject for this month's luncheon and tour. The Poly Canyon Village Complex is the largest single construction project in the history of the CSU system with 2,700-beds including three residential neighborhood areas. The meeting will be held at Poly Canyon Village and parking in the village will be available. Hope to see you there!

LOCATION:

Poly Canyon Village
One Grand Avenue
San Luis Obispo, CA



DATE & TIME:

Thursday, July 16th
12:00 p.m. (Noon)

MENU:

We are still exploring meal options with Campus Dining and the menu has not been confirmed. At a minimum, a vegetarian and non-vegetarian option will be offered.

RESERVATIONS:

Seating is limited to 50 participants. Please sign up by 1:00 p.m. Friday, July 10th, at the Branch web site (www.ASCESLO.org). Please attend the luncheon if you sign-up – some restaurants will charge the Branch for every seat we reserve, regardless of the actual attendance. If you have specific dietary restrictions or have questions, please contact Tom Zehnder at (805) 544-4011 or by email at TomZ@wallacegroup.us. The cost is \$25 for members or guests and \$10 for student members.

PRESIDENTS PERSPECTIVE:
Leaving a Legacy – Lessons from MJ

Children of the '80s and music and dance enthusiasts around the world are mourning the loss of legendary pop star Michael Jackson. This month I thought I would reflect on the lessons he has taught us about being successful professionally and perhaps leaving a legacy through our work.

First, recognizing personal strengths and talent as a youngster, and fostering that talent through practice and learning is key to success in your career. Many of us recognized early on that we had an inclination toward math and science, and signed up for accelerated classes in those subjects – maybe even joined math or science clubs or entered into contests to further develop our skills. And of course we became members of ASCE. Unlike many other child stars, Mr. Jackson crossed over into adulthood with success professionally, and as a civil engineer, you must also avoid temptations that the college world can offer. Temptations and hurdles come in many forms; I even had a professor that admitted to trying to weed the weak ones out.

Second, once you are working, it is important to continue to adapt. While Mr. Jackson's talent and unique style remained constant, he was able to adapt to changing conditions, in his case popular culture and opinion, in order to maintain his success (the sparkling glove became a sparkling arm band, for example). As civil engineers, we must continue to learn and adapt our professional skills and judgment for changing conditions – whether it is new technology, regulations or societal needs – in order to stay competitive and successful.

Third, make friends along the way. Our relationships with other civil engineering professionals, clients and the public are critical to individual success and the success of our profession. When you have a project as big as "We are the World", you can draw upon the strengths of your colleagues to get it done effectively. They may even "be there" to open a door if the door you were headed toward closes.

Lastly, Mr. Jackson also taught us what to remember – manage your success wisely and always exercise sound judgment. Since talented performers are compensated with insane amounts of money (what we value as a society is a whole other subject), many, to their detriment, try and maintain a certain lifestyle even under unanticipated circumstances. Having a plan to maintain success during challenging events in your career – economic swings or a shift in civil engineering service needs – and having the foresight to see them coming and implementing the plan, are

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MEET THE MEMBER - ROB DOWN, P.E.

This month we have an opportunity to meet Rob Down, who currently serves as the Vice President of the San Luis Obispo Branch of ASCE. Rob is originally from this area (between Arroyo Grande and Lompoc), attended Arroyo Grande High School, and received a Civil Engineering degree from Cal Poly in the mid-1990's. His technical specialization is geotechnical engineering. Upon graduation, Rob worked at Miller Pacific for three and a half years in Marin County. Since 1998, Rob has been with Earth Systems Pacific, where is currently Project Engineer and Vice President. Rob enjoys the region and was happy to return to the Central Coast.

For the last couple of years, Rob has been Project Manager for the Poly Canyon Village project on the Cal Poly campus. This project is apparently the largest on-campus student housing project in the nation. The final phase of the project was just completed in June. The project cost approximately \$300 million and is the largest LEED certified project to date in the California State University system. Rob has enjoyed being involved in a large-scale local project. He has specifically embraced the challenges of a schedule-driven project wherein he was required to solve problems on the site in real time (bringing out the "engineer in us all"). An example of a specific challenge was modifying foundation details, including incorporating structural

slabs, to efficiently account for relocated buildings and associated changes in bedrock conditions.

I asked Rob whether he has any recommendations to young engineers entering the profession. Rob was quick to respond with "get field experience". He remarked that such experience is especially important for geotechnical engineering, but important for all disciplines. Rob believes that you become a better engineer after seeing firsthand and understanding the construction process. Rob recalls his curriculum at Cal Poly as bringing him through the steps associated with the entire design and construction process. Rob is now teaching as a lecturer in the Architectural Engineering Department and brings his experiences into the classroom directly.

Rob serves as student liaison (practitioner advisor in ASCE terminology) to the Engineers without Borders (EWB) student chapter at Cal Poly. This has taken a "big chunk of time" from Rob's schedule, but has been rewarding as well. He has enjoyed bringing students through the entire research-design-construction process on various projects. Rob has served as the liaison for the Nicaragua and South East Asia project, where the group is developing mixture ratios and compaction techniques for interlocking compressed earth blocks. Rob traveled to Nicaragua with the EWB team in September 2008 for soil evaluation, site

grading, and project planning. He will return this September to begin construction of one-story masonry structure and a retaining wall. Rob has enjoyed impacting the students through exposure to these sustainable, challenging, and exciting projects. Each international trip requires a student liaison (i.e., professional). Rob indicated



that the EWB chapter has a small pool and is soliciting more involvement from the local professional community. This is a fantastic mentoring opportunity. Has everyone got their passports up to date?

Rob and I briefly discussed ASCE's Body of Knowledge initiative (Policy 465), which supports the requirement for a master's degree or equivalent to qualify for professional licensure. Rob responded with "I definitely have an opinion on that". Whereas he sees a need for continuing education requirement for licensure, he feels that it should be an employers choice whether to select someone with a master's or not. Rob sees a great value in a master's, but believes that it will discourage students from working for a year or two before undertaking graduate studies.

Rob stays busy with his family life as well. He enjoys hiking and camping with his wife and daughter. Rob coached his daughter's soccer team this year and was even seen with green hair for the parade. When you are as green and sustainably-inclined as Rob, there is simply no denying it!

~ Jim Hanson



PRESIDENT PERSPECTIVE (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

critical to continued professional success (also see “making friends along the way” above). Additionally, while it may seem like the perfect solution for showing off your baby, there are other considerations to make before holding him over the balcony railing (I really never have understood what that was all about). Never forget to think about safety, regulations and the impact of going in a certain direction as you consider alternatives. In civil engineering, exercising good judgment can also mean the difference between life and death.

So as you practice your favorite MJ dance number in his honor late one night in your cube after a stressful public meeting, please also remember his lessons for having a successful career, and perhaps even leaving a legacy. Maybe you too will create your own sparkling glove that will immortalize your civil engineering success.

~ Courtney Howard

CAL POLY SCE STUDENTS CONTINUE TO RECEIVE TOP HONORS

Roshani J. Patel Receives 2009 Daniel W. Mead Prize for Students

Roshani J. Patel has been selected to receive the 2009 Daniel W. Mead Prize for Students! Her paper titled “A Sustainable Future” was selected as the top recipient for this Society award. The Daniel W. Mead Prize for Students is awarded annually on the basis of a paper on professional ethics.

Roshani’s paper can be found here:
www.asce.org/files/pdf/MeadStudents_09Paper.pdf

Cal Poly SCE Students Place 3rd at National Concrete Canoe Competition

Congratulations to the Cal Poly Concrete Canoe team for a third place finish at the National Concrete Canoe Competition held in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Cal Poly has finished in the top five for the past four years.

The team placed first in the Final Product category. Additionally, the team placed third in the design paper category and sixth in the technical presentation.

The paddling team excelled this year as well taking first in both the men's endurance and Co-Ed sprint. Cal Poly placed third and fourth in men's and women's sprints and the women took sixth place in the endurance race.

~ Jennifer Epp, PE, ASCE Region 9 Governor

Visit the ASCE National Website at
www.ASCE.org

OTHER LOCAL EVENTS

If you have an event you would like posted at no cost, contact Syllas Cranor at 781-5260 or at scrantor@co.slo.ca.us.

The local chapter of the **American Public Works Association** meets on the second Wednesday of the month, every other month. For details, contact Jay Walter at jwalter@slocity.org.

The Central Coast Branch of the **California Land Surveyors Association** usually meets the second Thursday of each month. Contact Rochelle Vierra at 549-3461 or Rochelle_Vierra@dot.ca.gov for more information.

Cal Poly’s **Society of Civil Engineers (SCE)** welcomes local professionals to its regular meetings held alternate Wednesdays at 7:00 pm in Room 13-118. For further information, contact Kari Wagner (kariw@WallaceGroup.us) or Jeff Spannbauer (jeffs@cannonassoc.com).

The Central Coast Chapter of the **International Code Council** meets the first Thursday of the month at Margie’s Dinner. Contact Sylvia Aldana at 781-4671 or saldana@co.slo.ca.us for information.

The **American Institute of Architects** meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month at Vista Grande Restaurant (Cal Poly). For information, call Jeff Emrick at 549-8658.

Engineers Without Borders meets on the second Wednesday of each month at Noon. For further information, contact an EWB Officer at ewb.slo@gmail.com.

The **Central Coast Geological Society** meets every second Tuesday. For information, contact Lou Blanck at 542-4626.

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