

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope everyone is doing well and recovered from March madness. At the end of the March newsletter, I asked everyone to cheer the West Virginia Mountaineers to victory! The membership of CAGE did a great job since WVU reached the final four!

To start, I want to write about a subject that I believe is important, to CAGE and Civil Engineering. Last month, Board member Tonya Hart and I had the opportunity to judge a Science Fair at an elementary school in southwest Denver. I was impressed by the students' hard work and innovation. Several of the projects were about magnetism, photosynthesis, and electricity. Although the projects were well thought out and presented basic science, I did not observe one project that was related to Civil Engineering, or for that matter engineering.



John H. Hart, P.E.
CAGE President 2010

Recently, I was catching up on my reading from the February 2010 ADSC "Foundation Drilling" magazine. While reading, I came across an article by Scott Litke in regard to educating youths about Civil Engineering. Please see attached article. In a quick overview of the article, Scott presents an argument to educate youths about Civil Engineering; in particular, the geo-professional field.

Where I am going with all this is that I believe we as Civil Engineers have not done and are not doing enough to educate our next generation about the profession of Civil Engineering. I would like to change this lack of knowledge about our profession and think we as CAGE members can contribute to this effort.

One way we can accomplish this is to provide CAGE outreach to the community. To start, we can be active in career days at colleges and professional days at schools. Another way to educate is to allow field trips of local schools to our geotechnical firms. Several opportunities exist and just a few have been mentioned. We just need to do something!

The CAGE board has started this effort. Alan Lisowy and Aaron Bagley have volunteered their time to educate 7th and 8th graders at a Littleton school about Civil Engineering. This is a small step but I would encourage other individuals of CAGE to become more active in their local education network. In addition, CTL Thompson has volunteered to host a field day for the same 7th and 8th graders to explore the geotechnical and material laboratories. Again this is a small step but if all the geotechnical firms in CAGE can host one field trip, several youngsters will gain knowledge about Civil Engineering.

If you are interested in participating in CAGE Outreach, please contact one of the board members.

Other Items:

The *CAGE Position Statement on the Use of Post-tensioned Slab-on-Ground Foundations for Support of Residential and Light Commercial Buildings in the Colorado Front Range* was approved by the CAGE board.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED

Sometime in the near future (I know you have seen this before), the CAGE Guideline for Asphalt Pavement design in Colorado will be distributed to the CAGE membership for review and comments.

The date for the 2010 CAGE Technical seminar has been set for December 3 and the location will be the same as last year, PPA Event Center in Denver. As mentioned in the March Newsletter, LRFD (Load and Resistance Factor Design) for Geotechnical engineering will be the topic. The CAGE board is finalizing commitments from speakers and subject matter. A brochure is forthcoming.

As announced in an earlier newsletter, the CAGE board has decided not to renew the ASFE regional organization status. Although all board members believe ASFE is a worthwhile organization, the CAGE board did not believe the membership was gaining from the regional organization status. This was confirmed during last summer's survey.

The CAGE board is exploring other venues of information exchange with similar organizations. I contacted CalGeo (The California Geotechnical Engineering Association (www.cgea.org)) to discuss their organization. Phone conversations indicate CAGE and CalGeo are similar but different. To learn more about CalGeo and its potential benefit to CAGE, Andrew Garner and I will attend the CalGeo annual conference at the end of April. Upon return from California, we will provide a report to the board. In return, CalGeo representatives will attend the CAGE Technical Seminar in December. The intent of interaction with CalGeo is to improve CAGE as an organization through this information exchange.

Finally, dates for the CAGE golf outing and sporting clay shoot are forthcoming.

Thank you,

John H. Hart, P.E.
CAGE President 2010

CAGE is looking for volunteers to serve on its Communication Committee. Members of the Committee will assist with developing relevant material for this newsletter and the CAGE website. The goal is to provide technical information and professional support to the CAGE membership. If you are interested, please contact Becky Roland at admin@cagecolorado.org.

MARCH LUNCHEON

MEETING NOTICE
COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERS

WEDNESDAY, April 14, 2010

11:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Lakewood Country Club

6800 W. 10th Avenue, Lakewood

Luncheon Cover: \$25.00 for CAGE members, \$30.00 for non-members, \$15.00 for students

“Utility Locates”

Sandy Samuelson – Utility Notification Center of Colorado

If you have any horror stories about utility locates or accidents with utilities you don't want to miss this month's meeting. Sandy Samuelson, Member Services Administrator for Utility Notification Center of Colorado will discuss the process for both Web and phone-in ticketing, policy and legal issues regarding who should obtain locates (geotechnical engineer or drillers) and some new and exciting proposals to make the system better.

Please FAX or email your reservations **before noon, Friday, April 9, 2010** to:

Becky Roland, CAGE

Fax: (720) 230-4846, admin@cagecolorado.org

You can RSVP online at www.cagecolorado.org. Just click on the April 14 event!

Walk-ins may not be guaranteed a meal, so please RSVP by April 9!

CAGE meets the second Wednesday of every month from September through May. Be sure to mark your calendars and join us for lunch.

Out of My Mind _____ What, No Foundation?

by S. Scot Litke, Editor

My original thought for the subject of this issue's "Out of My Mind" column was going to deal with all of the conveniences we take for granted. Most specifically, how engineering provides a panoply of wonders for those of us fortunate to live in the "developed world." Then I received (and finally read), the January 4, 2010 issue of *Engineering News Record*. ENR is clearly the most up-to-date, and possibly most widely read publication in the civil engineering/civil construction industry, other than *Foundation Drilling* magazine, of course.

The issue of which I write focuses on the "Best of the Best Regional Projects of 2009." The issue is also full of really neat photographs of construction projects and/or people undertaking the various tasks associated with construction. I'm all for acknowledging the most spectacular and the most mundane aspects of what folks do in our line of work. No criticism there. What I do find objectionable is the lack of inclusion of those who provided the foundations and/or the earth retaining systems for the wonderful projects offered up as the "Best of the Best."

This kind of lack of recognition has been a bane of my professional existence for the almost 30 years that I have been involved in this industry. It is a rarity in the general civil construction press to find a mention of the subcontractor who built the foundation or shoring system that supports these constructed marvels, much less the geotechnical engineer of record. It is as if these structures emerge full blown right on top of the ground, over the river, through the canyon, whatever. It is not infrequent, however, in these projects of note that the cladding, or HVAC subcontractor receives mention, and by reference, praise.

What do we in the geo-profession have to do to gain the respect and public recognition for the incredible things achieved that the industry and its progenitors deserve? The Rodney Dangerfield aspect of our work



has bugged me for a very long time. Protestations to the contrary, "we don't get no respect!"

I am not the only voice in the construction wilderness to express this disdain. It has even been the subject of conferences held throughout the years of my tenure in the biz. However, the results of conferences, letters to the editor (many of which I have written), "woe-is-me-ing," has gotten us nowhere. Oh sure, every now and again after some major disaster there is some minor mention of the geotechnical engineering or geo-construction component of the fix, or more often the *cause* of the mess. This lack of respect filters down to how geotechnical engineering and geo-construction professionals are perceived and treated in project development, compensation, and contract leverage.

OK, enough of the rant. The question begged is, "what can 'we' do to bring about a change of perception, attitude, education, etc., to alter this condition?" I would hope that we could turn to ASCE, a large and respected organization with clout to join the fray. However, the geo-component of ASCE, while vocal and dynamic, is but one of the many sub-specialties served by the organization. Frankly, I don't expect much from ASCE. How about the Geo-Institute within ASCE? Great folks (many of us are members) that might be able to muster some energy in this realm; however, their purse strings, initiatives, and operating procedures are very much controlled by the "big parent."

We can look to the ADSC, ASFE, the

Deep Foundations Institute, and the Pile Driving Contractors Association, but frankly we are, even collectively, small potatoes in the grand construction scheme of things. Can we turn to the FHWA, a government behemoth many of whose personnel are "in our industry?" I'm afraid not, as the influence of those on our side of the table in this well intentioned agency, is not nearly as powerful as one might hope. Same goes for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, an agency that is engaged in a funding struggle for its own survival. Not to mention all the negative press it receives, much of which, by the way, I believe is unjustified.

While this effort toward legitimacy and recognition is daunting, it nonetheless needs to be addressed. Perhaps, if we continue to send our message, incrementally over time, we will be able to gain the attention of those that make the decisions about what really goes into a successful construction project, especially those grand undertakings that are so lauded on the pages of ENR.

I have an ulterior motive here (actually several) What would be the effect of bringing this message to young folks in elementary and secondary schools? This is something we can all handle in our own "neighborhoods." If our nation, our world, is to flourish, we will need more civil engineers. Why not let our young students know of the exciting challenges and personal gratification that can be gained by entering our specialist profession? WE are the only ones that can do this, so let's get busy.

Foundation Drilling magazine welcomes comments from its readers on this and other topics presented in the publication. Send comments to S. Scot Litke, Editor, at slitke@adsc-iafd.com.

A person without a sense of humor is like a wagon without springs. It's jolted by every pebble on the road.

– Henry Ward Beecher,
Social Reformer and Speaker

