



## Structural Engineering Licensing...

### When and How?

By Sanjeev N. Shah, PE, NCSEA Past President

There is general agreement, among structural engineers and others, that the practice of structural engineering is distinct and separate from the practice of civil engineering. Twelve U.S. jurisdictions (11 states) have acknowledged this fact by adopting structural engineering licensing acts. Some are Title Acts while others are Practice Acts. NCSEA Member Organizations (MOs) previously passed a resolution to work towards obtaining separate SE licensing in all of the 55 U.S. jurisdictions. Since licensing laws are unique to each U.S. jurisdiction, working to obtain separate SE licensing in all U.S. jurisdictions is an almost daunting challenge and can only be accomplished with patience and over time.

Licensing was the topic of much discussion during NCSEA's 8th Annual Meeting in Seattle, WA, during the fall of 1999. Keeping in mind that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, Delegate Fred V. Cowen, with the support of the Boston Association of Structural Engineers (BASE), proposed that the establishment of a structural engineering certification board might be a first step. In 2003, the NCSEA MOs voted to support the establishment of an autonomous structural engineering certification board to organize and implement a certification program. The Structural Engineering Certification Board (SECB) has since been established; and we can expect to see the structural engineering certification program underway soon.

With certification proceeding under the auspices of an independent organization, the NCSEA Structural Engineering Licensing Committee is gearing up to pursue uniform SE licensure. This will

involve coordination with NCEES and others who influence and/or regulate the practice of engineering in the different jurisdictions.

Licensure in any jurisdiction occurs via a political process. As such, any attempt to obtain SE licensure is vulnerable to politicking. The structural engineering profession does not have the ability (or resources) to counter the positions taken by non-SE professionals who, for various reasons, oppose separate SE licensure. Those who oppose SE licensure frequently point to the disparity in the SE licensure acts (in the 20% of jurisdictions that currently have SE licensure), and the fact that there is no national consensus on the standards of practice for the SE profession. Certification is the first step toward answering this argument.

Fortunately and unfortunately, our battle for SE licensure must occur on a jurisdiction by jurisdiction, or state by state, basis. Failure in one state will not mean failure in other states, anymore than success in the states that now have SE licensing acts meant success in the remaining states. Instead, it can be a "lessons learned" experience that may help us succeed on the next battleground.

In support of this effort, NCSEA has set the following agenda for the short term:

- 1) Solicit and obtain input from our Member Organizations with respect to the following:
  - a) What do you see as the challenges to SE licensure in your state?
  - b) How, in your opinion, could we overcome those challenges?
  - c) If you have tried to obtain SE licensure in your state, and failed or succeeded, what lessons can you share?
- 2) Organize a round-table forum, at the NCSEA Annual Meeting in New Orleans, to discuss the information collected; and then come up with a "game plan". The goal will be to agree on a strategy, identify one or more key battleground states, and then focus our limited energies and resources on those states.

Please consider number one above to be a formal request and provide your comments to the author ([SNShah@leaeiliott.com](mailto:SNShah@leaeiliott.com)) or to the NCSEA office ([office@ncsea.com](mailto:office@ncsea.com)). **Your input and participation are key to NCSEA's success.** Please provide your input in a timely manner and be prepared to participate at the Annual Meeting in New Orleans this fall. ■

National Council of Structural Engineers Associations  
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**LOOK for our NEW website coming early July 2004**

**www.ncsea.com**



## NCSEA Conference Exhibits

Only 5 exhibit spaces are left at the September NCSEA Annual Meeting. Contact Emile Troup at 781-828-9408 or [steelstruk@aol.com](mailto:steelstruk@aol.com). If your audience includes practicing structural engineers and specifiers, this is the annual show to attend.



**National Council of Structural Engineers Associations**  
**Twelfth Annual Conference • New Orleans, Louisiana • September 23 - 25, 2004**

**Designing for the Coastal Environment**  
**Preliminary Program Highlights**

**Technical Presentations**

**A History of Driven Piles in New Orleans**

Lloyd A. Held, Jr., PE  
 This presentation will highlight the foundation designs of several New Orleans area buildings, particularly how the design approaches have evolved from the mid-1800's to the present.

**Designing Buildings for Floodplains: Recent Developments in Codes and Standards**

Christopher P. Jones, PE  
 This presentation will focus on flood-resistant design and construction in coastal and river flood hazard areas. Mr. Jones will discuss the applicable provisions of ASCE 7, ASCE 24, the flood provisions of the IBC and the IRC. The newly revised FEMA Coastal Construction Manual and the new Corp of Engineers Coastal Engineering Manual will also be discussed.

**Calculating Wind Loads using the Simplified Method of ASCE 7-02**

James M. Delahay, PE  
 Mr. Delahay, a member of the ASCE 7 committee, will explain the origins and applications of Method 1 - Simplified Provisions of the Wind Load section of ASCE 7-02. This method is applicable to a large family of buildings and reduces the solution time to a matter of minutes instead of hours.

**Hurricane Engineering**

Marc L. Levitan, PhD  
 Dr. Levitan is an expert in hurricane engineering and wind effects on structures. This presentation will provide insight regarding the meteorological aspects of hurricanes, their formation, and how they affect structures in the built environment.

**Marine Structures on Inland Waterways**

Clovis L. Morrison, PE  
 In his over 30 years of design experience, Mr. Morrison worked on design projects for a large number of the port and harbor facilities along the Mississippi River in Louisiana. This presentation will give a general overview of the design considerations for docks, piers, wharfs, bulkheads, and dolphins on inland waterways.

**Preservation of Structural Elements**

Ian R. Chin, PE, SE  
 Mr. Chin, the author of numerous publications on building claddings, will present a summary of the methods an engineer can use to protect structural members and systems in corrosive climates. Protection of steel and concrete will be discussed, and several case studies from Mr. Chin's experience will be presented.

Discounted airfares are available for travel to and from New Orleans on United or United Express between September 18 and September 29, 2004. To receive these special fares, you or your travel agent must call the United Airlines Meeting Reservations Center at 800-521-4041 and refer to Meeting ID 524AF.

*Hotel Monteleone*

214 Rue Royal, New Orleans, LA 70130-2201  
**Reservations:** Call the Hotel Monteleone at 1-800-217-2033 or (504) 523-3341. Single or Double Room Rate: \$149  
*This room rate is guaranteed only through September 1, 2004.*

**REGISTRATION FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Companion \_\_\_\_\_  
 Firm \_\_\_\_\_ Phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Fax ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Member Registration - \$495 per person**  
 Registration fee includes Thursday evening Welcoming Reception, Professional Program, Trade Exhibits, breakfast, lunch and refreshment breaks on Friday and Saturday, Friday evening dinner at the Musee Conti Wax Museum and Saturday evening dinner at the Closing Awards Banquet.
- Companion Registration - \$225 per person**  
 Companion fee includes Thursday evening Welcoming Reception, Friday continental breakfast, Friday evening dinner at the Musee Conti Wax Museum, Saturday continental breakfast, and Saturday evening dinner at the Closing Awards Banquet.

**Total Amount Enclosed** \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  Visa  MasterCard  American Express  
 Disability Requirements? \_\_\_\_\_

**If paying by check, mail check payable to NCSEA, with this completed Registration Form, to:  
 NCSEA • Suite 2010 • 203 North Wabash Avenue • Chicago, Illinois 60601.**

**If paying by credit card, fax this completed Registration Form to NCSEA at 312-372-5673.**

*Deadline for hotel reservations is September 1st.*

