



## The NCSEA 12th Annual Conference

New Orleans, Louisiana September 23-25, 2004

By Russell B. Gardner, Delegate, SEAoL

### Designing for the Coastal Environment

SEAoL, SEAoAL, SEAOG, and FSEA jointly hosted the 12th Annual Conference at the Hotel Monteleone. The activities began on Thursday, September 23 with an afternoon full of vendor workshops presented by SMI Joist, CETCO Building Materials Group, and RISA Technologies. The workshops were followed by the official start of the Conference, the Registration and Welcome Reception where all attendees had the opportunity to socialize with each other and visit with the exhibitors. The conference was attended by 90 registrants and 35 representatives from 30 exhibits. The delegates were generously given wooden wine boxes, garnished with a crawfish sack and containing Louisiana coffee, pepper sauce and Mardi Gras beads, Alabama pecans, Georgia peach preserves, and Florida oranges and marmalade.

Friday's session began with breakfast, welcoming and opening remarks by John Joyce and Sanjeev Shah, and roll call and introduction of delegates by Mike Tylk. Sanjeev challenged all attendees to a bead-collecting contest during their stay in the famous French Quarter. David Soulier then introduced Lloyd Held of Eustis Engineering, who in turn "built the foundation" for the Conference in his keynote address entitled *A History of Driven Piles in New Orleans*. Other interesting topics of the day included *Preservation of Structural Elements* by Ian Chin and *Marine Structures on Inland Waterways* by Clovis Morrison.

The coastal design topic proved fitting for the Conference in the wake of Hurricane Ivan and his damage to Alabama and Florida along the Gulf Coast. Chris Jones, Marc Levitan, and Jim Delahay each had photographs showing Ivan's destruction. Mr. Jones focused his discussion on designing buildings for floodplains, and Dr. Levitan later covered virtually all aspects of *Hurricane Engineering*. Mr. Delahay's *Calculating Wind Loads using the Simplified Method of ASCE 7-02* provided all attendees with useful information geared toward saving

design time and reducing calculation errors.

The Friday night off-site event was held at the Musee Conti Historic Wax Museum in the French Quarter. The museum tour, reception, and dinner with a live New Orleans jazz band were relaxing and enjoyable for all. Some of the engineers were spotted dancing with their spouses, while others went out to tour Bourbon Street. Now who said engineers are boring?

Saturday's sessions were dedicated to NCSEA Committee reports. The liveliest discussions were those regarding separate SE licensure and the SE certification plan. All delegates were urged to evaluate the licensure status in their respective jurisdictions and to provide input to the Licensing Committee so decisions can be made to target those most ripe for amended licensure statutes. Stan Caldwell and the Advocacy Committee distributed posters to the delegates, who will in turn place them in their local middle schools, high schools, and universities in an effort to encourage students to consider a career in structural engineering.

AISC and PCA sponsored the luncheons on Friday and Saturday, respectively. Jason Ericksen of AISC and David Shepherd of PCA gave presentations as part of their contribution to the Conference. The Saturday breakfast was sponsored by RAM International, during which Brian Quinn of RAM gave a presentation on their latest software. These presentations, along with the fabulous speakers, helpful exhibitors, generous sponsors, and the NCSEA Board Members and Committee Chairs all combined to make this Conference a huge success.

The Conference concluded with the Annual Awards Banquet on Saturday night. Sanjeev Shah, NCSEA Past President, and John Joyce, NCSEA outgoing president, emceed the event. All of the outgoing Board Members were recognized for their service, and Carrie Johnson made the presentations

to the winners in the 2004 Excellence in Structural Engineering Awards. Marc Barter presented Mike Tylk with the prestigious Robert C. Cornforth award for outstanding service to NCSEA and the profession. Sanjeev presented Emile Troup with the most coveted award title of all – Winner of the bead-collecting contest! At the conclusion of the banquet, John Joyce transferred the duties of President to Ron Hamburger of Simpson Gumpertz & Heger in San Francisco. President Hamburger outlined his plan for NCSEA's continued promotion of our profession in the coming year, including personal visits by Board Members to each of the member organizations.

In the wee hours Sunday morning after the end of the Conference, we were reminded of "Designing for the Coastal Environment" as Jeanne became the fourth hurricane of the season to strike the Southeastern United States. It is certain that we as structural engineers have learned from such events. However, it will take some time to sufficiently convince the public, state registration boards and, ultimately, our state legislative bodies, of the important distinction the structural engineering profession must be given in order to adequately protect the safety, health, and welfare of the public. Perhaps using our wisdom and resources throughout the year between now and our 13th Annual Conference in Kansas City will get us closer to achieving that distinction. ■



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