

# Editorial | NCSEA Conference

Learning From the Past and Changing for the Future

By James Malley, S.E., President, NCSEA



Since its inception 18 years ago, NCSEA has held an annual conference in September or October. This year's annual conference will be held October 20-22, in Oklahoma City, OK. The conference organizing committee has developed an interesting program and theme title *Leadership in Structural Engineering*, drawing speakers and panelists from NCSEA's past presidents. We hope you are encouraged to attend and hear the knowledge and experience that these stellar structural engineering leaders will be sharing. Please go to [www.ncsea.com/AnnualConferences/2011/2011Conference.aspx](http://www.ncsea.com/AnnualConferences/2011/2011Conference.aspx) for more information.

In addition to its continuing education programming, NCSEA's Annual Conference serves as the primary mechanism for the structural engineer members of its Member Organizations (MO's) to:

- Share information on the activities of their MO's
- Learn about NCSEA's activities and opportunities for getting involved
- Discuss issues of interest to the structural engineering profession
- Provide feedback and ideas to the NCSEA Board
- Recognize and honor the exceptional structural engineering projects of peers and outstanding contributions by leaders of our profession

Each MO sends a Delegate and, often, its Alternate Delegate, who not only attend the committee meetings, forums, and program, but who also participate in the business meeting and workshops on Saturday. Even if you come to the conference on your own, you are guaranteed interaction with a truly national contingent of structural engineers. In addition, a sizable trade show of vendors related to the structural engineering profession will take place during the Thursday and Friday programming; and, for the last time, the NCSEA Annual Conference will hold an offsite event, this year at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art. Finally, on Saturday night, there will be the Awards Banquet, the grand finale of the conference. NCSEA's Excellence in Structural Engineering project awards will be presented, as well as the individual Cornforth, Delahay and Service awards (visit [www.ncsea.com](http://www.ncsea.com) for information on these awards, nominations, and lists of past recipients).

The Friday night offsite event will be the last offsite event at NCSEA's conferences because, in the course of developing its Strategic Plan for 2011-2015, NCSEA elected to make certain changes to its program for future conferences. Traditionally, local MO's hosted the conference and worked closely with NCSEA staff in planning the program and



activities; and the conference location was rotated by region (East, Midwest, and West). This approach served NCSEA well for the past several years but, now, it seems to be time for NCSEA to take conference planning in-house and let MO's and MO members participate to the extent they would like to, without taking up too much of any single MO's valuable time and volunteer resources. The changes to NCSEA's conferences, beginning in 2012, can be summarized as:

- Conferences will be located in cities with relatively affordable airfares and easy access to major airports. The next three conferences, now listed on NCSEA's website, will be in St. Louis, Atlanta, and New Orleans.
- The Annual Awards Banquet will be moved from Saturday night to Friday night, so that more conference attendees will be available to participate without losing an entire weekend to the conference.
- The conference agenda will be reconfigured to end early Saturday afternoon, allowing for travel home on Saturday evening.
- Two full days of Diamond-Reviewed continuing education will be offered at every conference.

We believe that these changes will carry on the tradition of past conferences and, at the same time, free up MO's while continuing to increase the value and strengthen the content of future NCSEA conferences. The first conference to follow this new format will occur in St. Louis from October 3-6, 2012. If you have suggestions or ideas for ways to improve the conference, or would like to volunteer for the NCSEA Annual Conference Advisory Committee, please contact NCSEA Executive Director Jeanne Vogelzang at [excdir@ncsea.com](mailto:excdir@ncsea.com).

But, prior to that, join us in Oklahoma City this October!■

