



# editorial

## Structural Engineering... Organized for All

By Brian J. Leshko, P.E. Past-Chair, SEI Local Activities Division

Structural Engineering affiliations are organized at various distinct levels ranging from global to local.

- Structural Engineering Associations are state or regional *associations*, which are organized across the country through the National Council of Structural Engineering Associations (NCSEA).
- Structural engineering *firms* are organized collectively through the Council of American Structural Engineers (CASE).
- Structural engineering *members* are organized by affiliating with the Structural Engineering Institute (SEI) of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

Focusing on structural engineers as individual members of ASCE organized at the local level is under the purview of the Structural Engineering Institute (**Institute**). The stated mission of SEI is to advance, serve and promote the profession of structural engineering. This is accomplished through the synergetic work of four complementary activities divisions:

- Business and Professional Activities Division (**BPAD**) improves the quality of structural engineering practice and services, while advancing the standing of structural engineers in society.
- Codes and Standards Activities Division (**CSAD**) coordinates the activities of over 20 committees related to establishing, using, or discontinuing design standards for buildings and constructed facilities.
- Local Activities Division (**LAD**) interacts and provides the technical and professional services of the Institute to the Local Chapters/Groups, while serving as the two-way communication conduit.
- Technical Activities Division (**TAD**) is comprised of over 70 Technical Committees organized to advance the science of structural design by disseminating knowledge through technical publications, conferences, journals, manuals and reports.

As in any organization or relationship, the key to success lies in effective communication. This communication must be open and flow in both directions. Local Chapters/Groups express needs and make recommendations to the Institute Board of Governors (**BOG**). The BOG, in turn, sets goals for the Institute to advance the profession.

Institute goals (in no particular order) include:

- Public Policy—Lead public policy initiatives & encourage engineers to become involved.
- Education—Improve formal education and lifelong learning for structural engineers.
- Professional Practice—Improve professional practices.
- Technology—Promote understanding of emerging technologies.
- Business Practices—Improve structural engineer's ability to succeed in business.
- Codes and Standards—Lead standard writing activities and influence codes.
- Public Image—Improve public's respect for and understanding of structural engineers.
- Relationships with Other Organizations – Develop improved communications and cooperation between structural engineering organizations nationally and internationally.
- Research—Influence the type of research performed and disseminate the results.
- Organization—Build SEI's organizational strength.

The LAD has had a positive impact on several objectives that directly support the organization goal. Recruiting new members has been facilitated by establishing more local SEI Chapters/Groups. Developing an effective marketing plan has been aided by transforming local ASCE Structural Technical Groups into local Structural Engineering Institute Chapters affiliated with the Institute.

An effective way to share information on local Chapters/Groups' activities, attendance, successes, membership and partnering has been through previously bi-annual, now annual meetings, organized and sponsored by LAD, in Hartford, CT (2001), Chicago, IL (2001), San Francisco, CA (2002), Atlanta, GA (2002), Reston, VA (2003) and New Orleans, LA (2004). Look for an announcement later this year for the location of the 2005 meeting.

The two-way communication process has identified the following needs and recommendations from the local Chapters/Groups: provide SEI low-cost continuing education seminars, establish a speakers' bureau, maintain a website chat room, organize a PE/SE exam refresher course, and establish a disaster response committee.

Structural Engineering is all for one, one for all. ■

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