

## Shares Well with Others... SEA Activities Matrix

By Vicki Arbitrio, P.E., SECB, President, NCSEA

Like any organization, the strength of NCSEA may be found in the people. People who work on the things that they are passionate about and contribute back to our profession by sharing their passion. NCSEA exists to advance the practice of structural engineering and, as the national voice for practicing engineers, to protect the public's right to safe, sustainable and cost effective buildings, bridges and other structures. If we are going to be the national voice for practicing engineers, then we should also be a conduit for communication between our local structural engineering organizations.

Through the work of our committees, we provide assistance to our Member Organizations (MO's) by addressing issues and concerns that are important to them. In that light, the Board of Directors would like input from state Structural Engineers Associations (SEA's) regarding what they consider to be their most important issues, challenges and tasks. All SEA delegates have recently received a single page summary of each MO's activities as reported for the 2005 Annual Conference Book. This list is by nature abbreviated and is intended as a starting point to help the states with similar interests and committee activities get in touch with one another, in order to share their ideas, strategies and programs. Delegates are encouraged to share this list not only with their state officers, but with their entire SEA membership.

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Our goal is that any MO starting a new activity will contact delegates from other SEA's and keep the Board of Directors informed. Although we already have national committees addressing most issues, the NCSEA Board hopes that this list of activities will also suggest topics for national discussions at future Annual Conferences. Each year the NCSEA delegates reiterate that they want to hear what the other states are doing. NCSEA would like to encourage more open forum discussions and sharing of ideas.

The NCSEA Structural Engineers Emergency Response Plan (SEERP) is a perfect example. The SEER Committee reviewed the existing plans used across the country, particularly in Washington and California, where responding in emergencies has a long history. The committee developed a standard plan, including input from FEMA Urban Search and Rescue and the Incident Command System under which most Fire, Police and other emergency departments work. This plan is available through

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the NCSEA office and can be adopted by any SEA. In 2005, twenty-one SEA's indicated they have state SEER committees. Representatives from each state SEER committee could plan to meet at the next NCSEA Conference in Salt Lake City to compare notes. These state committees could then provide feedback to the national committee regarding improvements and suggestions to strengthen our network of responders.

Another example is state newsletters. Nationally, we communicate via STRUCTURE® magazine and via *Structural Moments*, the periodic newsletter from the NCSEA President. State SEA's communicate with their members in a multitude of ways: from 16-page, full color, monthly newsletters, to single page email updates. Would you like to see what other states publish? Maybe in addition to delegates at the annual conference, your SEA's Newsletter Editor should attend and share ideas about successful publishing! Discussions could include article types, layout software, photo software, printing and mailing options, electronic newsletters, and so forth.

Similarly, a dinner program that is successful in Michigan should also be well-received in Indiana, Illinois and Ohio, if not farther afield. Continuing education is becoming a more important part of each practice, large and small. NCSEA's Continuing Education committee and at least 20 state organizations are working hard to bring high quality, informative seminars, lectures and programs to their members. Each state can take advantage of national programs like the Diamond Review program, Winter Institute and co-sponsoring of seminars. Here is another opportunity for SEA's to share information about what works and what does not.

Along the same line, trying not to reinvent the wheel, Linda Delahay, Executive Director for SEAoAL (Alabama), has taken the lead on an Executive Director information exchange and communication network. SEA Executive Directors interested in participating should email Linda at [lsdelahay@pobox.com](mailto:lsdelahay@pobox.com) (with a copy to NCSEA Executive Director, Jeanne Vogelzang, at [execdir@ncsea.com](mailto:execdir@ncsea.com), please).

Just like they taught us in kindergarten, sharing is good. Sharing makes everyone's task a bit easier. So please review the State Activities list and update it. If you don't have a copy, please visit [www.ncsea.com](http://www.ncsea.com). Use it; call the delegate in the state next door. ■

