

# Editorial | Important Meeting for All Practicing Structural Engineers

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The 2012 NCSEA Annual Conference will be held in St. Louis from October 3 – 6. The theme will be “*The Spirit of St. Louis – Design Trends for the Future*”. I strongly encourage all practicing structural engineers to attend, for an outstanding opportunity to learn from and interact with leaders of the structural engineering profession.

The conference will kick-off on the morning of Thursday, October 4<sup>th</sup> with a series of talks on hot topics in the code and standards development arena. After an overview talk on the main changes in the 2012 IBC by NCSEA Code Advisory Committee (CAC) Chair Ron Hamburger, Wind Subcommittee Chair Don Scott will provide details on the newly adopted ASCE 7-10 wind provisions and insight into the likely direction of the next edition of the ASCE 7. Seismic Subcommittee Chair Kevin Moore will tackle how to apply the ACI 318 Appendix D provisions on anchorage to concrete in seismic applications, a controversial topic that can be misinterpreted by practicing engineers. This will be followed up by a summary of the implications of the new provisions for strength-based masonry design by General Engineering Subcommittee Chair Ed Huston. Evaluation Services Subcommittee Chair Bill Warren and ICC Evaluation Services Director of Engineering Jim Collins will wrap up the session by describing the ICC Evaluation Services program for approving new structural products and how it affects your engineering practice.

Once we’ve all been updated on the latest important code developments, we will be further enlightened by keynote speaker Lawrence (“Larry”) Griffis of Walter P Moore and Associates. Larry, one of the world’s pre-eminent structural engineers, will speak on *Structural Engineering Practice – Instilling “A Culture of Discipline”*. His talk will focus on the changes to our professional practice that now require structural engineers to not only have technical skills, but also be trained to collaborate, communicate, and document their every move. To achieve success, or even survive, in this challenging but rewarding profession, engineers must learn and practice a certain *culture of discipline*.

Thursday’s afternoon session will begin by focusing on the latest developments related to snow loading provisions of ASCE7-10. Dr. Michael O’Rourke will cover the basis for the changes to snow provisions. This will be followed by discussion from Joe Zona on lessons learned from snow-induced collapse of buildings last winter from the heavy snowfall in New England. Joe’s emphasis will be on the primary factors that led to the collapses, including the performance of buildings constructed using current ASCE 7 provisions for snow loading. Thursday’s program will wrap up with a presentation on the devastating effects of the 2011 Joplin, Missouri tornado by Randall Bernhardt and Malcolm Carter, who participated in an effort by SEAKM to investigate the performance of some of the building types damaged by the tornado. This investigation found commonalities in damage patterns, regardless of building type, and developed recommendations for building code updates and further research.

On Friday morning, the focus will shift to updates on emerging tools and technology for seismic design. Jon Heintz of the Applied Technology Council (ATC) will present key findings, conclusions, and discoveries from recently completed and ongoing ATC projects addressing R factors, tall building design, ground motion selection, soil-foundation-structure interaction, and soft-story building evaluation and retrofit. Ron Hamburger will follow up with a detailed overview of the ATC-58 project report, *Seismic Performance Assessment of Buildings* (FEMA P-58), the next-generation of performance-based methods that estimates the consequences of seismic damage on individual buildings in terms of casualties, repair costs, and downtime.

The technical sessions on Friday afternoon will be presented by NCSEA Publications Chair, Dr. Tim Mays, who will present material from two recent NCSEA-generated design guides that should be on the shelves of all practicing engineers, as well as two soon-to-be-published design guides that many practicing structural engineers have been seeking. Tim’s presentation on the first two guides, titled *Guide to the Design of Diaphragms, Chords and Collectors* and *Guide to the Design of Out-of-Plane Wall Anchorage*, will focus on example problems and appropriate hand and computer modeling techniques necessary to design these elements. Tim’s presentation on the second two guides, titled *Guide to the Design of Building Serviceability* and *Guide to the Design of Foundation Systems*, will focus on all areas of serviceability, including practical example problems, 2012 IBC Chapter 18, and ASCE/SEI 7-10. Tim will conclude with an overview of the topics of other upcoming NCSEA design guides.

While I hope you agree that this is an outstanding lineup that will provide you with valuable information and new tools to improve your practice, the conference has much more to offer. On Wednesday, October, 3<sup>rd</sup>, the conference will host ICC Evaluation Services hearings, NCSEA committee meetings, exhibitor and vendor presentations and a tour of the nearby AZZ Galvanizing plant, all at no additional cost to Conference attendees. The annual meeting of NCSEA’s 43 Member Organizations will occur from 8 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. (Member Organization reports) on Friday and from 8 a.m. thru lunch on Saturday. Social events include a Wednesday evening reception hosted by the Structural Engineering Certification Board (SECB), a Thursday evening Exhibitor Reception, and a Friday evening Awards Banquet, presenting the NCSEA Excellence in Structural Engineering awards and honoring engineers who have made outstanding contributions to the structural engineering profession. Also note that for the first time, Young Members (defined as members age 35 and younger) will be offered a special 25% discount on Conference registration fees.

St. Louis was selected for this year’s Conference because of its central location, as well as reasonable air fares and hotel rates (\$102/night plus tax). I hope that you will agree that the outstanding technical program, as well as all of the other activities at the conference and the reasonable price point, make this year’s annual conference a terrific value. For more information and to register, please visit NCSEA Conferences and Institutes at [www.ncsea.com](http://www.ncsea.com). I hope that all of you will meet me in St. Louis! ■

