

*"The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority."*

– Kenneth Blanchard

## From the Executive Director

Thomas W. Smith III  
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Dear ASCE Member,

You'd have a hard time finding a greater study in contrasts between the state of U.S. infrastructure and the progress being made abroad than what we saw during the recent **international presidential mission** to Hong Kong and Taiwan. But based on the reception 2017 President Norma Jean Mattei and I received there, American civil engineering, ASCE, and the standards we set remain in extremely high regard.

With a sharp eye on getting the most value out of the trip, we packed so much into our itinerary we were joined at every meal by leaders of sister societies, executives of large consulting firms, university leaders, members of our Sections and International Student Chapters, government policy makers, or some combination of these.

Norma Jean and I appreciated the enthusiasm that greeted us wherever we went. On our arrival we

enjoyed a dinner meeting with past, present, and future [Hong Kong Section](#) presidents and a good discussion on the Section's future direction.

### Inside this edition

- Successful wide-ranging presidential mission to Hong Kong and Taiwan
- International financiers seek ASCE's advice on investing in U.S. infrastructure
- ASCE Innovation Contest poised to find engineering's "next big thing"

### Section Informant

- Best Practice: Take advantage of free email tool through ASCE
- Advice on reviving dormant Sections/Branches in archived webinar
- Ask Counselor Tara: What are our public disclosure requirements?

### Dates to know

#### July

**28-29** Board of Direction meeting

#### September

**1** Submissions due for Outstanding Section and Branch Web Awards

**15-16** Leader Orientation

**17-18** Presidents and Governors Forum

#### October

**8-11** ASCE 2017 Convention

**10** Annual Membership Meeting



Our first full day was spent with peers at the **Hong Kong Institution of Engineers**, highlighted by a renewal of our agreement of cooperation. A gala dinner followed, featuring a Dream Big-themed speech on Hong Kong infrastructure by Norma Jean, and a roster of attendees representing the cream of Hong Kong's infrastructure industry, including leaders of the east Asian divisions of **AECOM** and **ARUP**, the new chair of the **Institute of Civil Engineers, Hong Kong Association**, and airport and port engineering leaders, and others.

Government officials at the highest levels were eager to meet us. We watched a session of the **Hong Kong Legislative Council**, equivalent to our Congress, and talked with Council President Andrew Leung and a member representing the engineering constituency. We also met with the country's secretary for development, Eric Ma, himself an engineer.

At an **International Student Group conference** organized for our appearance, we met future civil engineers from Hong Kong, Macau, and several from mainland China, including eight active ASCE student chapters, who appreciate ASCE and would like more engagement, despite obstacles caused by internet restrictions in China.

Our time also included taking part in a **Section-organized symposium** on building information modeling and geographic information systems software, featuring an address by Norma Jean on BIM and GIS opportunities and challenges. As if that weren't enough, we toured construction of Hong Kong airport's new third runway, a mind-boggling effort involving the reclamation of about 650 hectares (1,567 acres) of land offshore.

World-class infrastructure also was easy to find in **Taiwan**, where Norma Jean and I took a trip via an impressive high speed rail line, delivering a smooth ride of more than 180 mph. The government's high speed rail director general was among the Taiwanese officials we met; another was the minister of the public construction commission, who explained how the rail was financed through an approach to P3 known as BOT, for Build and Operate by private enterprise for a time, then Transfer to government ownership.

Equally impressive was our tour of Taipei 101, the world's tallest building when opened in 2004 and for the next five years. Today it's the world's tallest and largest green building, achieving LEED platinum certification in 2011. We were privileged to have its design chief engineer, Shih-Ling Gan, as our guide.

Taipei is home to the **Chinese Institute of Civil and Hydraulic Engineering** and the **Chinese Institute of Civil Engineers**. In a productive meeting with leaders of each society, we discussed ways they could collaborate with ASCE, including continuing education

webinars and in promoting gender equity in the profession.

As the island nation is prone to significant earthquakes, **National Taiwan University** has established a major seismic engineering research center on its campus. We explored the facility and its work with its director, an ASCE Fellow, Shyh-Jiann Hwang.



While at NTU, Norma Jean and I were among the headliners of a joint CICHE-ASCE seminar on trends in civil engineering. Norma Jean spoke on sustainability, while my talk about the 2017 Infrastructure Report Card generated a surprising amount of interest and follow-up questions.

Norma Jean and I were honored guests at special dinners hosted by major consulting engineering firms. Our thanks to ASCE Fellow James Tai, chairman of **T.Y. Lin International**, and to the leaders of **CECI**, which happens to be the firm behind that amazing high speed rail project, for a pair of memorable evenings. In turn, we hosted ASCE Fellows living in Taiwan at a special dinner in their honor.

My thanks to Director of Global Programs Meggan Maughan-Brown, whose work made this trip a success, from planning to on-site guidance.

Just before setting off for Asia, the month began with great discussions with our British and Canadian sister societies. **Institution of Civil Engineers** 2017 President Tim Broyd and I talked about possible joint opportunities, the next Triennial Summit with the **Canadian Society for Civil Engineering**, and the possibility of promoting *Dream Big* in Britain.

CSCE is going through a transition period with the departure of its executive director, and Norma Jean and I traveled to its annual conference in Vancouver to meet with 2017 President Susan Tighe, who is also an active ASCE member. We discussed joint activities including the 2018 International Conference on Sustainable Infrastructure, to be held in Montreal.

The trend toward more public-private partnerships is accelerating, with P3s at the core of

President Trump's infrastructure proposal, and growing investor interest. A pair of groups representing international investors eager to get into the U.S. market sought out ASCE for guidance.

The **Global Infrastructure Investor Association** represents financiers from Great Britain, Canada, and Australia, including Credit Suisse and Morgan Stanley. **Industry Super Australia** manages infrastructure investments for a major Australian retirement fund. In back-to-back meetings with leaders from each group, Senior Managing Director Casey Dinges, Managing Director of Government Relations Brian Pallasch, and I discussed the status of U.S. infrastructure spending and what the future may hold, including P3s. We also addressed concerns raised about U.S. regulatory processes.

I came away from our second **ASCE Innovation Contest** winners event believing we could be the ones to discover the "next big thing" in engineering. Anyone who [saw the winning concepts](#) on display, met the innovators, and heard the [advice from investors](#) on how to make innovations marketable, feels as optimistic. The contest's success and its potential in the years ahead are due to the dedicated efforts of our Industry Leaders Council and its unflagging commitment despite these leaders' heavy workloads.

I continue to represent ASCE on the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's **Association Committee of 100**, which held its semiannual retreat recently in Pennsylvania. As might be expected, there was a fair amount of discussion about what the future may hold under President Trump's administration. We gained some insights from the president's chief of the Small Business Administration, Linda McMahon. In conversation with Chamber of Commerce President Tom Donohoe, he revealed he remains undaunted and even optimistic about the prospects for a gas tax increase.

### **Congratulations to ...**

... **Tom Peterson, P.E., M.ASCE**, chief engineer for the Port of Portland, OR, and a stalwart supporter of ASCE, on his retirement next month from the port after a 30-year career. His commitment to the Society extended to supporting ASCE membership for all engineers on his staff of 75. With our annual convention in his Portland back yard last fall, Tom served as vice chair of the Local Planning Subcommittee.

Until next time,



## **Section Informant**

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### **Best Practice: Don't struggle alone with getting the word out on your activities**

[Tennessee Section](#) President Ashley T. Smith, P.E., M.ASCE, an associate/project manager at HFR Design, provided this exclusive Best Practice to Section Informant. For more Section and Branch Best Practices, [download a copy](#) of the guide's latest edition.

As the saying goes, "if a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?" As Section or Branch officers, you do a lot of work. However, if you're not

communicating what you're doing and what's going on with the Section or Branch, it will go unnoticed and you will likely have poor attendance at your events.

ASCE has great resources for you to help communicate with your members. Any Section or Branch can have a free Constant Contact account to upload their membership database from ASCE and then easily manage member emails. Constant Contact allows for a variety of formats – standard emails; HTML newsletters, event registrations; polls; plus social media and mobile integration.

It's typically better to provide more content in fewer emails so your members aren't bombarded. Once emails go out, you can measure their success in opens and clicks, even whether they're being read on a computer or phone. Constant Contact will even suggest a time to send your emails based on when your members read them.

Engineers may not always be the best communicators, but ASCE has given us a great tool with Constant Contact, so go make some noise in the forest!

### **New advice to revive struggling Sections and Branches in latest webinar**

Thirty local ASCE leaders heard new strategies and approaches to rejuvenate a dormant Section or Branch in the latest Struggling Section and Branch webinar. Hosted by Maine Section Past President Lauren Swett and the Leader Training Committee, the webinar featured examples of revivals in North Dakota, Indiana, and Virginia and what made them successful. [Enjoy the 45-minute archived webinar.](#)

### **Grow leadership skills and serve the profession as a national officer candidate**

Each year the Society holds an election to fill leadership positions at the regional and national levels. Open positions include President-Elect, Geographic Region Director, Technical Region Director, and Region Governor. For the positions that may be open in your Region and the qualifications, see the [position opening notice](#).

### **Witness engineering for a zero-sea-level city at this year's Convention**

With the ASCE 2017 Convention in New Orleans this October, ASCE President Norma Jean Mattei, gets to welcome attendees to her hometown. As a preview of what conference attendees will find, Mattei outlined some of her hometown's engineering challenges and successes for *ASCE News*. [Read her thoughts](#), and for more on what's in store, visit the [2017 Convention](#) website.

### **Free ASCE ad resources available for your Section/Branch media**

New graphics, related text, and links for current ASCE activities, suitable for use on your website and in social media, newsletters, and other digital media, are now available for [your group to download](#). Materials on the virtual community ASCE Collaborate, the Historic Landmarks vacation photos online gallery, and the upcoming ASCE 2017 Convention have been added to a folder that already includes resources on the giant-screen engineering movie *Dream Big* and the *2017 Infrastructure Report Card*. [See what's available](#) for your group's free use.

### **Ask Counselor Tara**

**What are the public disclosure requirements for a tax-exempt group such as ours?**

*Each month ASCE's General Counsel Tara Hoke responds to legal questions posed by Sections and Branches. [Send Tara an email](#) with your question.*

**Question:** Public disclosure requirements help the public make informed decisions about

their involvement with a tax-exempt organization, such as ASCE and its local entities. What are the public disclosure requirements for a tax-exempt group such as ours? [Read Tara's response.](#)

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