NSPE will See Big Changes in 2006

Dan Munson, PE, President

MSE State Board Nominations

Our annual MSE State Board elections will be held in May. There will be a vacancy opening on the board, and we are taking nominations to fill that seat. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else to sit on the State Board for a 4-year period, please send an e-mail to mse@assoc-mgt.com, or drop a note to MSE, PO Box 20996, Billings, MT 59104-0996.

Your State Board is focused on the following goals, and if you feel that you can help us attain them, please consider nominating yourself:

- Grow the Montana Joint Engineer’s Conference for 3 full days of educational tracts, attracting over 300 engineers from the region.
- Continue to grow a Montana Engineer’s premiere website. We desperately need an individual to champion this project now.
- Grow the Montana MATHCOUNTS program to involve 500 students.
- Dissolve society and professional boundaries by fostering collaboration with other engineering societies, the MPELS board, and other design professionals.
- Continue to grow the Engineering Outreach program to Montana schools.
- Monitor Montana legislative issues for opportunities to enhance the engineering welfare and image.
- Partner with the Montana Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors (MBPELS) on issues that affect our profession in the state.
- Working in collaboration with the MBPELS and the state architecture folks to discuss issues of common concern like public education, building codes, need for design professionals, and incidental practice.

Nominations are due by April 30th, so that we can hold timely elections in May.

MATHCOUNTS News

Teams of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade student Mathletes from middle schools all across Montana competed in the State MATHCOUNTS contest on Monday, March 20th at MSU in Bozeman. A total of 29 middle schools across the state comprised of 93 students participated. The top four individual Mathletes, and the coach of the winning team, won an all-expense paid trip to the MATHCOUNTS National Competition.

Alec Patterson from Missoula’s Washington Middle School, Aidan Shackleton from Missoula’s Sussex School, Ryan Marcotte from Billings Will James, as well Glen Dower from Cascade County Homeschool won the top honors at the State Competition this year. These four students, along with Missoula’s Washington Middle School Math teacher Teresa Toller, will represent Montana as our official state team at the National MATHCOUNTS Competition in Detroit on May 12th. Patterson and Shackleton are returning champions who represented Montana at the national MATHCOUNTS competition last year. In addition, Alec Patterson is the first Montanan ever to qualify on the national team three years in a row.

The top teams this year were Missoula’s Washington Middle, Missoula’s Sussex Middle, Billings’ Will James, Great Falls’ North Middle, and Lewistown’s Middle Schools.

Thanks to the engineering volunteers around the state, 451 students from 67 middle schools around the state could compete in MATHCOUNTS, and another 300 students could experience the program.

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**Put the Brakes on Fatalities**

Troy Monroe, P.E., Chair for ‘Put the Brakes on Fatalities’ Campaign for MSE

Put the Brakes on Fatalities is a national campaign sponsored by the National Society of Professional Engineers. This year we begin the campaign in Montana. The focus of the campaign is to bring awareness of traffic fatalities to the public. Here in Montana traffic crashes take the lives of hundreds of Montanans every year. Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for 15-20 year olds. Montana has one of the highest percentages of fatalities per capita, and more alarming, the second highest percentage of traffic fatalities attributed to alcohol.

The Put the Brakes on Fatalities campaign will try to reduce the numbers of deaths caused by traffic crashes through public awareness. In its first year the campaign will try to establish a resource base for the sharing of literature, educational opportunities and ideas. The campaign will team with the University of Montana to develop public service announcements that will be distributed statewide. We will also be sponsoring public demonstrations with the help of some local fire departments.

For the campaign to be successful on a statewide basis we will need the assistance of people throughout the state to contact local media outlets, to present educational demonstrations or to talk with local civic organizations. Anyone interested in assisting with the Put the Brakes on Fatalities Campaign please contact us at putthebrakesonfatalities@yahoo.com.

In the next couple of months we will have a web page with news and information related to the campaign and an area to share ideas. Please continue to visit www.mtengineers.org for news and a link to the future web site.

And please glance over the FATAL FACTS out-take that will be presented in each issue of MSE’s newsletter. And remember “Seat Belts Save Lives”!

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**Stray Thoughts**

By Tom Abel, PE, Secretary-Treasurer

**Stray Thoughts**

“That first day with Jerry Jeff and Murphy in Coconut Grove produced a basic revelation that changed my whole way of looking at who I was and where I was going. My worries were somewhere else, and my tropical soul had finally come home to the sun. I knew from the first day in Coconut Grove that all the other s__t would somehow take care of itself in due time.”

Jimmy Buffet, *A Pirate Looks at 50*

Every Friday we have a lunch at the Bulldog in Kalispell with some engineers and other friends. In Germany it is called a “stamptisch”, here it is called a bull session. The rules are we don’t talk business, but that rule is broken regularly. This tradition was started by Staley Engineering, continued by Paul Stokes, and we continue it now that Paul has passed away. One hot topic was how does your cell phone know when the time zone changes? Have you ever traveled over Lookout Pass into Idaho on I-90 and noticed that the cell phone is still on Mountain Time after crossing the border? By the time you stop at the Hot Rod Cafe in Post Falls, the cell phone usually has found the right time. Just when does it change? “Yes officer, I was just looking at my cell phone to see when the time changed and all of a sudden there was this big truck in front of me – I had no time to stop.”

On one cell phone checking trip last fall I attended a series of engineering seminars in Spokane. During one time slot, there were no topics interesting to me, so I attended one on hiring engineers in case some day Abel Engineering Inc. hit the big time and we needed more than two employees. The presentation was not at all what I expected.

The presenter had been around the block a few times, he was not right out of college. He told about starting his engineering career in Iowa. His idea was to provide engineering services to small towns that had no engineers in residence. The concept was a success and he found himself eventually having several offices scattered around the state. A big problem for him was keeping good employees.

Being an engineer, he approached the problem analytically. First he figured how much it costs to lose an engineer – interviewing, hiring, time lost, training. He said it cost him $5,500 to
replace an $8 per hour employee. Once he put a cost on the loss of an employee, he knew how much he should spend to fix the problem. The solution to the problem was simple once he discovered it. The solution is to match the right person with the right job. He said a person could work in the wrong job (out of his or her comfort zone) for a short period of time, like a month or two. After a month or two in the wrong job, the person either becomes a very low producer taking lots of breaks, being late for work, taking days off, or he quits. He said if you put the right person in the right job, they can’t wait to come to work, they are self-motivated, they are loyal to the company, they don’t want to quit because they are happy. Everyone wins. He said after devising a method to match employees to jobs, his loss rate dropped to very small percentage. The method of selecting employees was so successful, he now has a new business that assists in “Maximizing Workforce Potential” as is says in the brochure. Steve Wilson, Willow Creek Consulting, (208) 762-8638, www.willowcc.com

On the long drive home, I began thinking about the hiring seminar; the one I thought would be least interesting to me. I remembered back before graduation from MSU with my mechanical engineering degree and after going on some job interviews, it occurred to me that I did not like a lot of what engineers do. One job offered to me was at Boeing Company working on the electrical panel for the 777 airplane. I took one look at the 6 foot square cubical and tried to imagine the next 3 years cooped up in there. Not for me. As the owner and only engineer in our company, there are days when I am not very productive because the task is something very tedious. The e-mail is checked every half hour, too much time is spent on the phone, E-bay is checked for 30 inch tapered stanchions for the boat and a 59 Porsche rear brake drum. There are other days when the task is challenging and the day flies by and I work into the evening without a second thought. It occurred to me I might not be suited for all the tasks I have in my own business. Maybe I should take the Willow Creek survey and find out what my own profile looks like. Maybe our business would be more productive if someone else who enjoyed doing such tasks did those tasks that I force myself to perform.

When I read the words by Jimmy Buffet it reminds me of the advice I have given my students at Flathead Valley Community College and my own kids - “Follow your passion, the rest will fall in line”. I began to think about what my passions are. Did I sit in front of the stars as a kid dreaming about doing septic system calculations? Yet this is one task I kind of like. One dream I still have is to have a backpack full of Shigley, Mitschke, Timoshenko, a slide rule, and my ’59 Porsche convertible and a business card that reads “Have Slide Ruler, Will Travel”. Now that is the nerd coming out in me again. Maybe the Willow Creek survey would help me follow my passions in life. I am old enough that if I don’t follow them now, there will be no time left. These are my thoughts, the Willow Creek brochure is on my desk, no action yet.

At our last MSE meeting we decided that all the officers should call members just to say hello, and listen. In Kalispell, I would like to take that one step further and have a “stamptisch” at least once at lunch time, and have all the MSE members who are within a reasonable distance attend. Think about it. You will be notified. The place will be The Finish Line. Maybe we can crack the cell phone question.

In Kalispell, I would like to take that one step further and have a “stamptisch” at least once at lunch time, and have all the MSE members who are within a reasonable distance attend.
These students are introduced to the wonderful world that mathematics can open and able to take advantage of these skills at an earlier level making their future and ours brighter.

Through the financial support that these sponsors, Montana MATHCOUNTS has continued to grow and reach more students in Montana. These students are introduced to the wonderful world that mathematics can open and able to take advantage of these skills at an earlier level making their future and ours brighter. THANK YOU!

Without our dedicated Chapter Coordinators from throughout the state, we could not have a successful MathCounts program. Thank you for all your efforts and hard work!

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Thank you to all the volunteers that helped at the individual Chapter Competitions and at the State Competition! Without this help, not a single competition could be held! The time you gave was thoroughly appreciated — we hope to see you again next year — and, hopefully, you enjoyed the experience!!!
Call for Nominations to the PE Hall of Fame

The Montana Society of Engineers (MSE) requests nominations for induction into the Montana Professional Engineers Hall of Fame. Plaques honoring the inductees have a permanent home at the Montana State University College of Engineering.

The award was established in 2002 to recognize Montana professional engineers who have made outstanding contributions to the engineering profession and public welfare of Montana. This award is open to all professional engineers licensed in Montana.

Qualifications/Method of Selection:

The MSE Executive Board will consider nominees for induction into the Montana Professional Engineers Hall of Fame. Professional engineers licensed in the State of Montana and working on projects in the State of Montana are eligible. Retired and deceased professional engineers are eligible.

MSE Executive Board members will consider these aspects of the nominee’s career: The candidate’s professional integrity is beyond question; the professional reputation is more than local in character; the undertaking of services upon which the award is based are of high order; and there is more than an ordinary relationship between the undertaking of services and the public welfare. Preference is given to candidates who have consistently promoted the social and professional interests of the engineer.

A complete entry has been enclosed in this Newsletter—please make your nomination TODAY!

Reference Material Concerning the Practice of Engineering

The Montana Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors (MBPELS) has published a brochure entitled “The Professional Use of Seals – Requirements regarding the practice of Architecture and Engineering in Montana”. This material was developed in a joint effort between MBPELS and the Montana Board of Architects.

The information was produced to aid Montana Building Officials and the general public in understanding the laws governing the practices of engineering and architecture in Montana. Both boards are very concerned with the practice of Engineering and Architecture by unlicensed individuals. A joint committee between the boards has been set up and this is the first action taken by the committee.

The material will be sent to all Building Code Officials, Architects, and Engineers in the State. Copies may be obtained from Brooke Jasmin, Program Specialist, MBPELS. Brooke can be reached at telephone number 841-2351 or e-mail address bjmasmin@mt.gov.

Visit www.nspe.org TODAY!

The Montana Society of Engineers (MSE) requests nominations for induction into the Montana Professional Engineers Hall of Fame.

This material was developed in a joint effort between MBPELS and the Montana Board of Architects.

National Society of Professional Engineers

• NSPE Job Board
• NSPE 2005 Convention
• New EJCDC Custom CDs
• NSPE Spring Ethics Form
• Membership
• Licensure, Ethics & the Law
• Employment

• Education
• Government Relations
• Forums
• Engineering Practice Areas
• Student Information
• Partners
• And Much, Much, More . . .
Free Publicity  
By Jeff Crilley

This book is a start-to-finish guide to becoming a media darling while raking in a fortune in free publicity! Mr. Crilley spoke at the NSPE Winter Meeting held this past January.

Engineers rarely toot their own horn. With this book, you’ll learn how to create ideas that are guaranteed to get coverage, who to call and when, how to write a killer press release, what to say during an interview, how to hold a news conference the media will love, how to combat negative news, and how to keep reporters coming back for more!

Jeff Crilley is an Emmy Award winning journalist with over two decades of TV news experience. Over the years, Jeff has made a careful study of the why some are successful in getting coverage and others aren’t. In Free Publicity he shares secrets even public relation professionals don’t know.

NSPE has distributed a complimentary copy of his book to all NSPE chapter offices. The MSE office would be happy to loan this book out if someone is interested. Give us a call!

05-06 MSE Board

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Deadline for the Next Issue of this Newsletter is June 10, 2006
Submit articles and advertising to mse@assoc-mgt.com