

SPONSOR PROFILE — MCMAHON ASSOCIATES, INC.

This article recently appeared in McMahon's company newsletter, and is reprinted with permission. The author, **Rod Plourde**, our Civil Engineer of the Year honoree for this year, makes many good points about our profession.

Making Better Engineers

By *Rodney P. Plourde, Ph.D., P.E.,
President of McMahon Associates, Inc.*

How do we make better Engineers? It's kind of a loaded question. However, looking back at my own experience, certain things jump out.

Intern Programs

Intern, or cooperative work programs offered by universities provide Engineering students the opportunity to work and gain practical experience as part of their education. This exposure not only provides on-the-job training, but is a precursor to decisions by these students on the career they may wish to follow upon graduation. For we employers, it is an excellent recruiting tool, and provides us the opportunity to test a person's abilities and character before a permanent full-time offer is made.

Mentoring Programs

Once hired, of course, on-the-job training of a graduate continues. However, young Engineers need not only technical training, but also guidance or advice on professional development or even life issues which may arise. That's where a mentoring program, where the mentor is not the graduate Engineer's immediate supervisor, becomes important. The graduate Engineer can use his or her mentor as much or as little as he or she wants, to discuss whatever issue he or she wants. No ground rules. Just a relatively independent sounding board who the graduate Engineer respects.

Professional Development Programs

I've touched on this topic repeatedly in past "In Motion" articles. It can be provided as much within the office, through Internal Training Workshops (ITW's), as well as through universities and professional societies.

Professional Society Involvement

Engineering societies not only provide professional development opportunities, but also networking opportunities, which are vital to the growth of a young Engineer.

Cross Training

Much discussion often occurs on whether Engineering has become too specialized. Specialization certainly has its place in any profession. You don't go to a general practitioner if you need heart surgery. However, cross-training of young Engineers, outside their specialty, is important to both them, to develop their "big picture" focus, but also to the employer, to be able to shift the graduate Engineer to other types of projects as workload and project priorities may dictate.

Communications

Transportation Engineering is not merely conducting traffic analysis or performing roadway design at your desk. Your analysis results and design recommendations must be effectively communicated to project managers first, and then clients and review agencies. While one can't just throw a young Engineer into a contentious client/agency dialogue, there is a need, and benefit to both graduate Engineer and employer, of gradual, increasing exposure to communication of Engineering products. It can start with just attending and listening at meetings, to gradual assignment of some Q&A at these meetings, to low-key presentations, and finally, to Project Manager level presentations and communications. Communication is not always an acquired skill, but must be developed.

Summary

Hopefully, both young Engineers and others alike who read our newsletters will come away with their own insights as to the benefits of such practices.

McMahon Associates, Inc. specializes exclusively in transportation Engineering which includes state highway design, municipal roadway design, transportation studies and planning, and traffic signal design, having served Federal, State, regional, and local organizations since 1976. With more than 31 years of experience, McMahon has compiled an extensive record of completed transportation Engineering projects. McMahon consists of a 150-person firm with excellent credentials in Transportation Engineering.

DISPATCH FROM THE GOVERNOR

Your Region 2 Governor, that is...
Chris Menna

The Region 2 Board of Governors (R2BOG) met in Philadelphia on March 18 to develop a strategic plan and to discuss the upcoming ANCS National Conference that the Fall. Your Governors have been assigned tasks to help further what is needed within the Region. These include: developing the master plan, TWP, school groups, and activities; finding ways to support the National Conference; helping the other Regions with the Region 2 project; Information Report Cards; and encouraging members of the National Conference to name a few. The R2BOG also received an official invitation for Region 2 Governor elected position. The candidate's name will appear in an upcoming letter.

All members are encouraged to go to the National website and view the activities about our Region. Get familiar with your Governors, contact them for help, and challenge them with your ideas. They are committed with their actions to our Society Division, who is here to be on the National Board. Remember that your Governors do not represent your Section in particular, rather everyone within the Region. Our Region is made up of the former Districts 4 and 5, which includes all of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and the National Capital Section (greater Washington, D.C. area). We have about 15,000 members and Region 2 is the most geographically compact in all of ANCS. Your Governors of elected and 2 appointed Society Division, and TWP Rep are ready to serve you.

TECHNICAL GROUP ACTIVITIES

Structures Group

DATE: Thursday, April 17, 9:00AM - 1:00PM

LOCATION: Room 2, 10th Floor Municipal

Services Building, 1401 Kennedy Blvd.

at 17th Street, Philadelphia

COST: \$20 refreshments and buffet lunch

included

OFFICER: Dr. Maheshwari K. Khan, PhD, PE

SUBJECT: Snow Analysis Course

This evening course is an overview of snow analysis and design of snow countermeasures. The course provides an understanding of the theoretical and practical requirements for the selection and application of snow countermeasures, based on various types, structures, components, and accessories. More details were provided in the March edition of THE NEWS.

Sign up by emailing ed@mcma.com.

Checks payable to ANCS, Philadelphia, are due by April 18. Send checks to:

Treasurer ANCS, Philadelphia Section, P.O. Box

3076, Philadelphia, PA 19104-0306.

Reservations can be made through our

Electronic Message Center: 1-800-442-4200

(Open 24 hours/day)

Space is limited to 30 people.

Construction, Engineering Management and Transportation and Urban Development Groups - Joint Meeting

DATE: Tuesday, April 29, 12:00pm to 1:00PM

LOCATION: Room 2, 10th Floor Municipal

Services Building, 1401 Kennedy Blvd. at 17th

Street, Philadelphia

COST: \$10 refreshments and buffet lunch

included

OFFICER: William T. Thomas, PE, Senior

Vice President, Urban Engineers, Inc.

SUBJECT: New York City "Magi" Projects

This presentation will cover several major transit projects currently underway in New York City. The East Side Access program (\$1.7 billion) will bring traffic of the Long Island Railroad into Grand Central Terminal via the existing unused 42nd Street tunnel and other proposed rail work tunnels. The Second Avenue Subway (SAS) project, a major fast program in 1975 is under construction and will add five new stations on the Upper East Side of Manhattan north of 42nd Street. It will tie into the current's 48 Avenue and Broadway tracks from the various downtown and extend the underground Lexington Avenue line.

In addition, related topics on new vehicle technology for use which will use these facilities will be covered, along with a brief overview of work currently underway at the Freedom Tower (former World Trade Center) site.

For reservations, please contact Donald Maheshwari at (215) 381-2884 or dmaheshw@mcma.com.