



New Look for NCSEA Web Site

After a long period of inactivity, NCSEA has placed considerable effort into updating our web site. We hope to make this a convenient place for engineers to find timely and important information about what is happening in the structural engineering profession. It presently includes links to individual member organization web sites, a calendar of NCSEA events, information on the activities of our various committees, and similar information. It can become a place where member organizations can post information also, for example, to alert others to upcoming seminars they are holding, annual meetings etc.

We are updating the web site in phases. First, we have attempted to update the actual information that is present on the site. Next we will be attempting to upgrade the “look” of the site so it is a more appealing place to visit. If you have not visited the site recently, you should do so. By the way, the URL is www.NCSEA.com.

Visit the site and provide us feedback about the features you would like to see added.

NIST World Trade Center Reviewers Needed

Early this year, many of us received an email from a person that advertised himself as leading an official peer review of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) report on the 9/11/2001 attacks on the World Trade Center. Many engineers responded to this email solicitation for reviewers. Shortly afterwards, NIST informed me that the person sending this solicitation was not in any way connected with the National Institute, nor was the review sanctioned by the institute in any way.

However, after several years of intense study, NIST is ready to publish a draft copy of their report on the twin towers for public review and comment. NIST has empanelled its own independent peer review team that includes some of our most distinguished structural engineers including Shankar Nair, Charles

Thornton, John Barsom, and Robert Hanson. As a result, NIST does not currently plan to solicit comments from NCSEA or any other professional organizations representing design professionals. Nonetheless, given that this report will constitute the official U.S. Government position on why the twin towers collapsed and what this should mean for building design and construction practice, I believe it is important for the practicing structural engineer to have an opportunity to review this report and provide comment to NIST on its content. I would like NCSEA to provide the “official” opinion of structural engineers on this matter.

NIST currently plans to publish its report, in draft form, specifically for review and comment, some time in June of this year. At the upcoming NCSEA Board meeting, which will be held in New York, on April 21, the Board will likely appoint an official review panel to coordinate NCSEA’s efforts. It is likely that many individual structural engineers will wish to perform their own reviews and offer comments. I do not wish to discourage this, however, I would like to offer NCSEA as a means of coordinating these various comments and, to the extent possible, speaking with one voice on the findings of the report. I propose to accomplish this by several means.

First, I want to provide an opportunity for the member organizations to nominate official members of the review panel. While we clearly want to have experts on tall building design be present on the panel, it should not, by any means, be limited to such persons. The findings of the NIST report may have broad sweeping impact on professional building structural design practice in the future. Therefore, the review should be conducted by a broad cross section of the structural engineering profession.

I apologize for the short notice, but I would appreciate nominations for panel members from the member organizations prior to our Board Meeting on April 21. Please feel free to send me your nominations, together with a one-page summary



resume for each nominee. These may be sent by email to rohamburger@sgh.com.

In future issues of the Structural Moments, I will publish information on the availability of the draft report. I would like to propose that individual reviewers and member organization review committees, conducting their own independent reviews, consider coordinating their comments through the official NCSEA panel so that the profession can speak with one voice. We will, in turn, ensure that every organization and individual who contributes to the review receives recognition in the transmission of our comments.

NCSEA Initiates Diamond Review Program

The NCSEA News column in the May issue of Structure magazine will announce the formal initiation of NCSEA's Diamond Review Program. The Diamond Review program is intended to assist structural engineers in obtaining continuing education in a painless manner, while facilitating the ability of providers of various types of seminars and educational programs to be able to offer continuing education credits for their programs.

The way the Diamond Review Program will operate is that a provider of continuing education will submit information on its intended program to NCSEA, for review and certification as eligible for continuing education credit. Once the program has received a successful review, anyone who attends the program can claim continuing education credit for it. These continuing education credits will more likely be acceptable to many state licensing boards as well as the Structural Engineering Certification Board.

The program will be open to a wide range of continuing education providers, including professional associations such as AISC, ACI and PCA, and individual member organizations. It will also be open to vendors of construction products and services. Potentially, it will be possible for many engineers to obtain a significant portion of

their continuing education hours by attending the vendor in-office seminars that many of us regularly have come through our offices.

To obtain Diamond Review Certification, a review panel must find that the program has sufficient technical merit and validity. A number of providers of continuing education programs have already applied for certification.

In order to make this program work properly, NCSEA needs a pool of reviewers to assist our Continuing Education Committee in reviewing these programs and determining if they are worthy of certification. Rather than burden a small group of individuals with the responsibility of reviewing these various programs, we intend to select panels of reviewers from a pool of applicants and to make small honoraria available for these reviews.

We are looking for volunteers with expertise in design with each of the construction materials, various types of structural analysis, different types of construction methods etc. Please assist us in locating potential reviewers. More information can be found on the NCSEA web site. Please encourage your members to complete the simple forms and participate in this program.

Summary.

What should you do now?

1. Review the NCSEA website. Provide feedback.
2. Nominate participants for NCSEA's review of the NIST report on the WTC attacks.
3. Consider providing your opinion on the NIST report to NCSEA's official review panel.
4. Complete and submit the form on NCSEA's website, to apply to review program submittals to NCSEA's Diamond Review Program.