

Meeting Minutes

Engineers Without Borders Chicagoland Professional Chapter

Date: September 25th, 2007

Time: 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Location: University of Illinois at Chicago, Engineering Research Facility

Format Change - We are adopting a slightly different format to our meetings. Each meeting will now begin with a PowerPoint presentation. Each committee will have a slide that offers basic information about what they do. While new members are digesting this information, the committee head can report on recent events for the group. Any change requests for the slides can be made to Jessica.

Policy Change – In the past, all of our communication has been through e-mail. Starting in the near future, we will open our membership mailing list to the student chapters in the Great Lakes Region. The mailing list is to be used only for chapter fundraisers, and members can opt-out via an upcoming e-mail. Please consider attending UIC's upcoming fundraiser, and contact them if interested.

Membership:

Please make any corrections you would like to your nametag on the sign in list near the door. ASCE is promoting a dual-membership discount. This is an exciting opportunity to recruit new members. The committee is looking for people, especially those involved with a project to become speakers. Currently, there is a speaking event once a month.

Research and Training:

The committee is looking for a volunteer to scout out local enrichment opportunities and organize chapter events. Contact Paul if you are interested.

Resources/Fundraising:

There is a Rotary presentation scheduled for October in Oak Park, and anyone with Rotary or Oak Park (preferably both) contacts is strongly encourage to attend. Invitations are required for Rotary events. As stated above, speakers are needed, and it is suggested if you are interested in giving a presentation that you attend one first. Grant writers are also needed and anyone with or without experience is welcome.

Public Relations:

Midwest Engineering Magazine, Summer 2007 issue features EWB-CPC in addition to EWB-UIC.

University Liaisons:

Liaisons are needed for a few different universities. Contact Rob if interested. Technical expertise is not required to assist in projects.

Social Committee:

There will be a social event in December in place of the monthly meeting as there has been in years past. Also, there is a happy hour hosted by ISPE on October 10th at Exchequer Pub in the south loop. Please plan on attending from 6pm to 8pm and help promote EWB. E-mail pending. Please RSVP for food purposes.

Regional Workshop Committee:

Online registration is now closed so please register at the event. The theme of this inaugural event is "Building Skills, Building Relationships". This event is going to generate increased activity throughout the region. If you are interested in getting more involved, contact John. The Workshop commences Friday at 5pm. More information can be found on the professional and regional websites. Please plan on attending.

Project Committee:

The Cuetzala implementation report is now available to download on the website. The power point will be available soon. Next week there is a meeting on the Phase 2 data collected on the trip. See Riaz if you are interested in being on the mailing list. The Guatemala site assessment presentation is also available. There will be a procedural change for approving projects beginning with the Guatemala project. Project teams will be responsible for having their community sign a Memorandum of Responsibility to clarify the expectations of both sides following the site assessment. The chapter will then vote on the project following approval from the projects committee. The executive committee will approve this project in due to the policy change. The process will be posted on the website for future teams.

Two new projects that the committee is investigating are in Africa. In Mali, a sanitation system and storm water project is proposed with the Rocky Mountain chapter. A Peach Corps volunteer completed the application with many unknowns. In Togo, a water supply and storage project can be followed up by an irrigation project in conjunction with the Denver chapter. The committee is looking for volunteers to further investigate these two projects. Also, local, or at least reduced travel (reservations?) projects are in need of investigation.

Guatemala Pedestrian Bridge Presentation:

The site Assessment for this project took place over Labor Day weekend with TEACH. The bridge connects several outlying villages with the town of El Estor in the eastern part of the country. TEACH proposed the project to gain access to a school that they have set up in the area. The terrain is mountainous and directly south of Chicago. It takes a full day of travel to reach the location of the bridge. The Mayan descendents in the area speak a language called Qeqchi, but there are Spanish-speaking translators in the area. In 2005, their previous bridge was lost in a hurricane and a log is being used in the interim. The main source of livelihood in the area is farming and the bridge is needed to take their harvest through the mountains. The river is only 20 feet across but the bridge will probably span 100 feet at 100 feet elevation. There is also a 10-foot drop in elevation from east to west. Preliminary excavation is in progress to determine the depth of rock on each bank. The preliminary plan suggests using a suspended cable bridge with concrete abutments. The goal is to complete the bridge design in early October for TAC review in November. An agreement was developed with El Quetzal to be signed by both parties. Materials will be purchased in El Estor. El Quetzal will provide labor, transportation, bodega, campsite and a latrine. Acquiring certified cable is a challenge in the country and currently the search is on for a discount or donation from the US. The proposed date of travel is January 5th –18th. Ingrid Perez of Schaumburg will be the translator and in the country at the time. A mason will be hired as well as a translator to Qeqchi. Volunteers are of course needed to continue progress on this project.