



# REALITY CHECK



Volume 00-01, Issue 7

Delaware Chapter ASPE

April 2001

**Bruce Gollicker, Editor, Pyro-Tech Fire Protection**

### **ASPE Mission Statement**

*The American Society of Professional Estimators serves construction estimators by providing education, fellowship, and opportunity for professional development.*

### **Officers & Committees 2000-2001**

<b>President</b>	<b>Ed Alexander, CPE</b>	<b>Planning</b>
<b>1st V P</b>	<b>Mike Gioffre, CPE</b>	<b>Education</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> V P</b>	<b>Jim Connell, CPE</b>	<b>Membership</b>
<b>3rd V P</b>	<b>Bruce Gollicker</b>	<b>Newsletter</b>
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	<b>Tony Ricciardi</b>	<b>Faxing</b>
	<b>Jim McLaughlin</b>	<b>Golf Outing</b>
	<b>Wilson Davis</b>	<b>Welcoming</b>
	<b>Fred Gschweng</b>	<b>Internet</b>

REALITY CHECK is published by the American Society of Professional Estimators Delaware Chapter, Inc., which is solely responsible for its content.

## **President's Message**

Estimating the cost of a project has several sub-functions: collecting and analyzing the documentation; organizing and completing the take-off process; pricing the items; completing the estimate and making the bid.

Over time certain of these functions become easier through repetition and others have been helped by the introduction of computers, digitizers and other aids.

"Pricing the items" is still one of the most difficult and demanding estimating functions. What makes it so difficult is there are so many items to track. For some trades, notably the mechanical

and electrical, pricing services are readily available. This combined with the computer programs, which allow customization of updates, is a great help. For other trades, it is not so easy. Millwork is an example of a trade where there are very few "standard" jobs.

Another major problem of pricing is the constant introduction of new products, new equipment and new codes. Any one of these can massively affect an estimate. Changing oil and energy costs also affect prices.

Traditionally, estimators have extracted pricing information from a number of sources: price books and computer pricing updates, vendors and manufacturers, subcontractors and suppliers.

Recently, a new source is coming into use. The Internet. It has a massive amount of information available - if you know where and how to find it. Later in this newsletter there is a reprint from the March 2001 issue of the magazine Consulting-Specifying Engineer of the article "Discovering Internet Resources".

This has a number of excellent ideas and tips on using the Internet. It is a tool that I think estimators will gravitate to because of the ability to find answers quickly. The trick is to understand how to search efficiently for information.

There are a number of search engines available: Yahoo, Google, Metacrawler, Altavista, Lycos, Nexis, Lexis, etc. The trick is to be reasonably specific - a single-word search will call up the world. Different search engines search different web pages, so what may not appear on one engine may be first on another. Usually checking the first 5 pages of the response of a search is sufficient to know if you were successful. If at first you don't succeed, modify search, use different words, different word orders and different search engines.

## **Dedicated to Improving the Skills of Construction Estimators...**

Like every tool, the Internet becomes easier to use the more you use it.

Ed Alexander, CPE  
ASPE Delaware Chapter President



## A History of Dedication

The *American Society of Professional Estimators* began in 1956. What started with fewer than 20 members in the Los Angeles area can boast today of thousands of members in chapters from border to border. ASPE was created with dedication and commitment to the idea of providing its members with tangible benefits:

✓ A professional society which promotes the highest standards and ethics in the practice of construction estimating.

Continuing education through seminars and lectures on construction-related topics. Our magazine, *The Estimator*, and local chapter newsletters carry technical, industry-related and other pertinent articles for the professional estimator.

An opportunity to become recognized as a *Certified Professional Estimator (CPE)* through the completion of our training and testing program.

A means of personally communicating with fellow professionals on a monthly and annual basis, providing an opportunity to exchange information and gain professional recognition for yourself and your company.

## Discovering Internet Resources

By JEROMIE WINSOR, Web Editor  
Consulting-Specifying Engineer -- 3/1/01

Engineers, as a professional group, have generally been quick to adapt to the benefits of the Internet; but how well has the Internet adapted to their needs?

It is safe to say that nearly every engineer working at a mechanical/electrical design firm has access to—and regularly uses—the Internet in the office. In fact, over 99 percent of the firms responding to *Consulting-Specifying Engineer's* 2000 Giants survey claimed that their workplace had Internet access. And while this high level of use remains true throughout much of the business world, engineers have rather specific informational needs. Finding the industry news, component specification details, codes/standards requirements and other professional information that pertains to engineering can sometimes be a challenge.

It has been many years since the Internet's wild early days, but that does not mean that it is no longer a jungle out there. The sheer volume of information on the Internet is astounding—and continues to grow. According to research conducted by the computer corporation NEC last year, an average of 5 million new pages are added to the Internet every day. As the Internet continues to grow, there is an increasing chance that the information needed is only a click away.

It's out there. It's often just a matter of discovery.

### Start spreading the news

Internet news sites are nothing new, but good coverage of the news related to the engineering profession is. What is most noticeable in this area is a greater fragmentation of quality news sources. Even the largest general news sites have compartmentalized, like a newspaper, making it easier to find specific news items.

Beyond the major online news sources, however, standard print media—such as magazines and newsletters—have also migrated coverage over to the Internet, often offering information above and beyond what can be found in their traditional print versions.

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Most of these magazine and newsletter sites now give the user access to daily or weekly news updates, lists of industry links and events, as well as the chance to search through past or current articles.

### **Product and specification information**

One of the best online resources for engineers is the wealth of sites offering product and specification information. According to *Consulting-Specifying Engineer's* 2000 National Engineering Survey, 80 percent of engineers go to the Internet for product information and about 70 percent access specification data from the Web.

The fact that this overwhelming majority of engineers is searching out product information on the Internet not only shows that the engineers are going to the Internet, but also that the information is out there.

A quick search of the Web reveals some very slick and deep manufacturer sites. Over the last few years, the sophistication of manufacturer Web sites has greatly increased, coupling more information with better design. Many also have "customer service" invoicing and order tracking on-line. For most of these companies, there has been a growing recognition that their corporate Web site is a major branding and business statement.

Often, the information on these sites is geared toward consumers, operational managers and staff engineers. But quite a bit of the content is also very useful to consulting engineers.

Commonly, these companies set up Adobe portable-document format (PDF file) versions of their print catalogs and specification data. PDF files are very handy for printing—much better than standard Internet pages—if a decent-quality printer is used.

Additionally, quite a few of these sites offer a wealth of background information about their products and services. This often includes market data and project profiles that offer the reader a chance to see much more about a product or a company than a specification sheet can relate.

**Codes, standards and professional organizations**

Another useful Internet resource for a current project is information on local building codes and authorities having jurisdiction (AHJs).

Nearly every state has a building-code adoption organization, and these building commissions and bureaus have, for the most part, some type of Web site. However, while some states have devoted a great deal of time and care to making an informative and useful site for building-codes, others are lacking.

The best sites have full lists of localities throughout the state with their specific codes and AHJs. The least informative sites do not even have basic information. Generally, it is a matter of finding the state or municipal site where a project is located and drilling down into the corresponding areas. The amount of information on these sites varies greatly, but most have some good contacts for further inquiries.

In addition to government building-code sites, there are a number of sites that can give you details on the codes from the organizations that created them.

Most professional and standards organizations have detailed sites, although some are primarily vehicles for selling proprietary code information. But this does not mean that there is not a wealth of useful information, especially for members.

Some organizations, such as the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), provide special online services for their members, who can use a login name and password to access online content that the general user cannot. These special membership options offered by Web sites are a new addition to the standard "brochure-ware" information, and are sure to become more popular in the future.

### **And even more ...**

Besides the major areas above, there are many other resources to be found on the Web, including licensing information, research sites, continuing education, environmental initiatives and employment opportunities.

Nearly every state has an online *professional-engineer licensing* site with information about the organization, licensing process and meetings, and online forms that can be printed and filled

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out. As with many government departments, Web sites are making it easier to do official tasks.

*Engineering schools* and departments in universities and colleges have sites that lay out their various programs and offer continuing-education class catalogs.

Some of the more in-depth *engineering, technology and science research* groups at these educational facilities—as well as at government departments and private firms—offer comprehensive looks at their research projects, complete with summaries and online ordering.

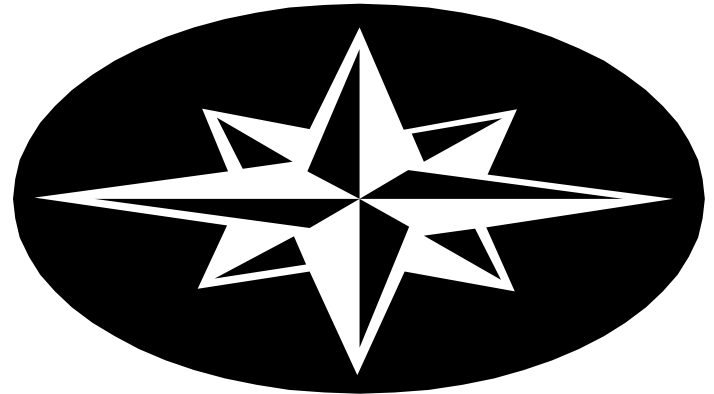
With a number of organizations devoted to *environmental initiatives*, ranging from energy efficiency to sustainable design to indoor-air quality, a great deal of information relating to these topics can be found on the Internet. These sites include government departments such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency—which offers a great deal of information on environmental regulations and best practices—and nonprofit organizations that can offer valuable news and publications.

Some of the biggest sites on the Internet are now *employment* outlets that offer the lure of searching hundreds of thousands of jobs all over the world. More narrowly focused sites offer only engineering jobs, and may do a better job of pinpointing the kind of job one is looking for.

While these are often very useful sites, perhaps some of the best resources for finding an engineering job are individual firm and organization sites themselves. Often the job information on these sites has not already been seen by thousands of others, and the user gets a chance to find out what qualifications a firm may generally look for. One drawback to this approach is that there is a tendency on smaller sites for information to be updated and reviewed slowly. For example, a job posting may be outdated by many months—or even longer.

As the Internet grows—as it is sure to—the number of resources for engineers will continue to multiply. While some engineers may prefer to get their news, product, membership and other information the old-fashioned ways, as the information and usability of these Web sites improve, they will increasingly become readily

accessible, user friendly resources. The computer and the Internet may never completely replace the library, but its potential as a resource is nearly endless.



**Have Your Product/Service Recognized  
by 76 Estimators in  
50 Delaware Market Companies**

### **GENERAL MEETING MINUTES**

The March meeting for the general membership of ASPE Delaware Chapter 75 was called to order at 6:30 pm, March 14, 2001. A quorum was recognized.

Opening remarks were made by Delaware Chapter First Vice President Mike Gioffre. After brief opening statements, all members introduced themselves, and the company they were representing.

### **ASPE Chapter Business**

ASPE Chapter First Vice President, Mike Gioffre, stated that the next ASPE general membership meeting would be held at 5:30 pm on Wednesday, April 14, 2001, at the Christiana Hilton. The program will feature Mr. Bill Dunklebeurg, Professor of Economics at Temple University. The

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discussion will be focused on the economy and the impact of the economy on the construction industry.

Mike announced the formation of a nominations committee to organize and direct the elections of new Board Members. Rich Murphy will chair the committee.

Wilson Davis and Jerry Doherty have volunteered to join the committee, and other members are encouraged to offer their support by joining the committee.

Jim McLaughlin, Chair for the Golf Outing, announced that the date has been revised to Thursday, June 21, 2001. A formal notification to all members will be issued.

National recognized three members for completion of the certification program. Certificates were presented to Chris Coliukos Sr., Chris Coliukos Jr. and Mark Fansler. Congratulations to all three members for their hard earned CPE certifications and for their continued support of our Delaware chapter.

#### Program

The guest speaker for the program was introduced. Mr. John Kunzier of Timberline, presented a well planned discussion on the uses and advantages of high-speed information systems and their use and growth in the construction industry.

The general meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm



#### ASPE Chapter 75 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

The March meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Society of Professional Estimators,

Delaware Chapter 75 was called to order at 6 PM on Monday March 19, 2001.

#### **Board members in attendance:**

Ed Alexander Chair  
Buzz Kingsley  
Bruce Gollicker  
Rich Murphy

#### **Other attendees:**

Wilson Davis  
Fred Gschweng

#### **Location:**

Bancroft Construction Office, Wilmington, Delaware

#### **General Business:**

1. Fred Gschweng, Website Committee Chair, provided and update as well as a preview of the ASPE Delaware Chapter 75 web site design and architecture. Website will be up and running as of 3/20/2001 and operational by April 1, 2001. (Website address: [www.aspede.org](http://www.aspede.org))

Fred also presented a handout see attached.

2. Ed Alexander, President, submitted a draft copy of the Academic Assistance Program form for review and comment by all board members. Please have all comments together for the next board meeting.

3. Ed Alexander, President, commented that the electronic voting was working exceptionally well.

4. Jeff Coopersmith, Finance Chair, stated that our current bank balance is \$6,458, including \$32 from the March 50-50 raffle, which was won by Paul Flannigan. 38 members attended March's meeting. We have also made a \$500 contribution to the ASPE National Scholarship Fund.

Jeff also has stated in his report that we need raffle prizes for the upcoming June golf outing. Some suggested items are sports tickets, shirts, hats, booze, discount certificates, etc.

5. Jim McLaughlin, Golf Outing Chair, Submitted the June ASPE Golf Outing Flyer for review. Attending members made comments. Menu's for the event will be finalized possibly by electronic voting?

6. Archives Committee: No report

7. Awards Committee: No report

8. Buzz Kingsley, Standards Committee Chair stated that the following reports are still under review: Metal doors and frames, and Doors and

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Hardware. Prefabricated Structural Wood has been reviewed by Tony Ricciardi and is acceptable.

9. By-Laws Committee: No current by-laws under consideration

10. Certification/Continuing Education Committee: No report

11. Ethics Committee: No report

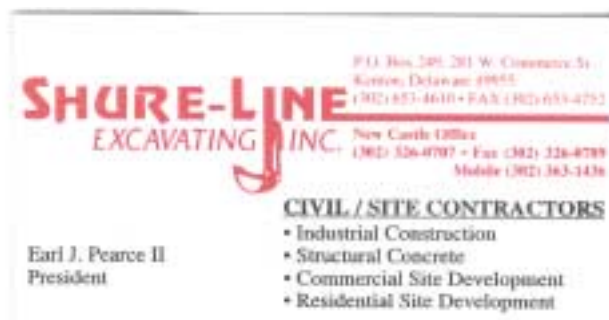
12. Faxing Committee: No report

13. Bruce Gollicker, Newsletter Committee Chair stated that last month's newsletter was sent out on time. He also reminded everyone to complete their committee reports and get them to him in a timely manner.

14. Jim Connell, Membership Committee Chair, stated that our numbers increased by one new member this month. John Deprophetis of Miken Builders, Inc. has joined that chapter.

15. Rich Murphy, Nominations Committee Chair, reported that the nominations committee would be formed prior to the April membership meeting. Nomination committee members include dating Wilson Davis. Also a draft of chapter officer and awards nomination forms was submitted for comment. The nomination period is open between April 11, 2001 (membership meeting) and closes on 5/9/2001 (May membership meeting). After May 9, 2001 official voting ballots for officers and awards will be mailed out to be returned signed and sealed up until June 20, 2001 or hand delivered to the membership meeting/golf outing on June 21, 2001.

16. The meeting was adjourned at 7:43PM EST.



## East Governor's Report March 2001

The overall feeling in the East Region is upbeat. The Chapters are well into their yearly schedules of meetings. The most prevailing problem seems to be getting better attendance at the monthly

meetings. Every Chapter President that I have spoken with have all voiced their frustration with this and to their credit are working with their boards to try and come up with the magic formula to get Chapter meeting attendance up.

The following are some samples of the Chapter activities around the East:

**New York Chapter 10** – Under the guidance of Chapter President Arnie Weitzman CPE the New York Chapter is having quarterly Chapter meetings in Manhattan. The Chapter has seen new membership and a new core group seems to be forming.

**Baltimore Chapter 21** – The Baltimore Chapter has full slate of meetings. The March meeting will be a tour of the Baltimore Museum of Art and April's meeting will take place in a local Baltimore quarry. Chapter President Dick White CPE reports that the Chapter is doing well and that they are looking forward to getting this years fishing trip on again.

**Greater D. C. Chapter 23** – President Larry Scribner CPE reports that the Chapter is doing well and they are holding meetings on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month. Although the meeting with the Chinese construction officials never came off he has kept the invitation open for them, if they ever get their visa difficulties straightened out.

**Garden State Chapter 26** – The board of directors of Chapter 26, with President Mark Langlois CPE leading the way, are hard at work planning next years meeting schedule and meeting topics. This May the Chapter will be holding their First Annual Golf Outing. The outing will benefit the Chapter's Scholarship Fund.

**Maine Chapter 37** – Chapter 37 is still going strong. President Reggie McLaughlin E reports that they are trying to get the old members interested again and get them back to attending meetings. If they can get the currant members interested again he feels that the old will bring in some new members. Chapter 37 is looking forward to their annual Golf Tournament and the year ending Lobster Bake. The Chapter has also been invited to participate in a Lorman Organization seminar and will put on "11<sup>th</sup> Hour Bidding" as their contribution.

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**Empire State Chapter 42** – President Harold Shugar CPE has extended an invitation to President Joe Majewski and myself to attend an upcoming meeting as speakers. Harold is hoping that the visit will spur member attendance and help with bringing in new members. The date still has to be worked out.

**Three Rivers Chapter 44** – President Mary Crawford CPE reports that the members of Chapter 44 are very busy with the construction of the new stadiums. The Chapter is looking forward to their golf outing on June 29, 2001. They are also looking forward to performing their duties as chief teller for the national elections. Mary promises that there will be no recounts or pregnant chads.

**Nutmeg Chapter 60** – Chapter 60 is getting ready to host the East Regional Meeting in May. President Doug Burdick CPE says that all be ready for the regional and invites all East Region members to attend.

**Philadelphia Chapter 61** – The Philadelphia Chapter is supplying instructors to Drexel University and the local chapter of the AGC for classes in estimating and construction related courses. President Jim Watko CPE reports that the Chapter is doing well and they have a full slate of meeting topics and speakers.

**Delaware Chapter 75** – Ed Alexander CPE and his Board has this Chapter humming along in high gear. Meeting attendance has averaged over 40 persons with a number of new members coming from meeting attendance. The Chapter is gearing up for their 2<sup>nd</sup> annual golf outing and Ed promises good weather and a good time for all who attend.

**Central Pennsylvania Chapter 76** – The newest Chapter in the East is holding their own. With monthly meeting attendance on the rise President Ron Fox CPE is looking to increase membership this year. The Chapter is publishing a newsletter and will hopefully submit for awards at this year's National Convention.

**East Regional Meeting** – will be held on May 19, 2001 in Southington, CT. Nutmeg Chapter 60 will be the host for the meeting. Milan Gowen CPE is

working hard to make sure everything will ready for the meeting.

**East Region Director** – At our last regional it was decided to appoint one director for the East Region to assist the Governor with his duties. The director, as of yet, has not been appointed but I hope to have one in place by the BOT meeting in Baltimore.

**2003 National Convention** – will be held in Portland, ME. Maine Chapter 37 is looking forward to hosting the affair.

**Chapter Visits** – This year I have visited the Baltimore Chapter for their joint meeting with AGC, AACE and ASA. Future Chapter visits include Chapter 60 on March 14<sup>th</sup>, and Chapter 26 on March 27<sup>th</sup>. I am hoping to visit Chapter 10, 23, 42 and 76 by the end of this year.

Overall the East is doing well. We have our strong Chapters and our weak ones but there is some type of activity going on in all Chapters.

John B. Stewart CPE  
ASPE East Region Governor

## Coming Soon

# 2001 Annual Convention

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[Wyndham Atlanta Hotel](#)

July 25th - 28th

 **2001 Annual  
Convention**

**Newsletter Reminder Notes:**

**Got Something to Say?** We want to hear your editorials, comments, and stories. If you run across an interesting article that would benefit the membership, please submit it to Bruce Gollicker, Pyro-Tech, fax (410) 392-8113. Deadline for submission is the last Friday of the month

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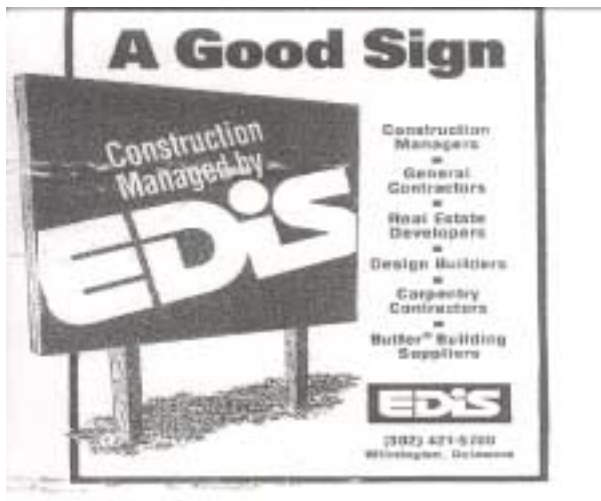
We know you're busy,  
So as a reminder.....

Unless otherwise noted, **Chapter meetings** are the **Second Wednesday** of each month. **Board Meetings** are the **Second Wednesday** of each month. Deadline for submission to the Newsletter is the last **Friday** of each month.

**ASPE Delaware Chapter Advertising Rates**

Size	(1) Month	(3) Mths	(6) Mths	(9) Mths	(1) Yr
Business Card	\$7	\$20	\$38	\$54	\$70
(2) Bus. Card	\$13	\$38	\$68	\$95	\$120
1/3 Page	\$20	\$60	\$105	\$150	\$190
1/2 Page	\$26	\$80	\$140	\$195	\$240

**Wanted:** Additional raffle prizes. Wouldn't it be nice if we had 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, etc. prizes for our monthly raffle? Some suggested items are sports tickets, shirts, and hats, booze, discount certificates, etc



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