AEG Sacramento Section

Tuesday, June 28, 2011

Location: Aviator’s Restaurant, Sacramento Executive Airport
6151 Freeport Blvd., Sacramento, CA.
Lots of free parking!  Link to map

Speaker: Robert E. Tepel

Topic: "Engineering Geology for the 21st Century: What is it Really All About?"

Agenda: 5:30–6:30pm – Social hour and student posters
6:30-7:30pm – Dinner
7:30-8:30pm – Speaker: Robert E. Tepel
8:30-8:45pm – Questions

Meeting Cost: $30 members (with RSVP) and $35 non-members
There will be a $3 surcharge for no RSVP
$5 students (no surcharge for student walk-ins)

Student Sponsorships welcomed!
Sponsor a student for $20 (or choose your amount)

You may RSVP by going to -- http://www.aegsacto.org or by sending an email to: Tim.McCrink@conservation.ca.gov
Speaker for AEG Sacramento Section – June 28, 2011

Engineering Geology for the 21st Century
What is it Really All About?

Cracking the Mysterious Case of the Missing and Misunderstood Raison D’être of Engineering Geology: The solution revealed, with examples that will help you in your career and business.

ROBERT E. TEPEL

Do you have the feeling that engineering geology is the Rodney Dangerfield* of the geosciences? Maybe you are just wondering why it is so hard to explain the value of engineering geology to clients, your employer, your friends, or your grandmother. It isn’t paranoia; it’s real. The condition occurs not just in the United States, but wherever engineering geology is practiced in the western world. Recognizing this, a small but growing number of engineering geologists in the U.S., Europe, Australia, and New Zealand have given serious thought to this lamentable lack and explored the reasons for it. What have they discovered, and how can you implement their findings to improve your career and business as an engineering geologist?

You will leave this program with….

• An “elevator speech” that defines (in very simple terms) the fundamental value of engineering geology to the client, the owner, the public, and your grandmother.
• The ability to communicate in very simple terms the essential differences between engineering geology practice and economic geology practice (so the guys next to you on the airplane understand why you aren’t out looking for gold or oil like all the other geologists they ever met or heard about).
• An understanding of core function of engineering geology: the one essential work process and work product that is unique to engineering geology — a practice process and product we do that no other profession does (or can do), and why it adds value to the design process, the finished/constructed project, and to the client’s or owner’s good name.
• For consulting engineering geologists, an understanding of the immediate and downstream consequences of engineering geology practice that will improve your client proposals and deliverables. Your clients will view you as someone who adds value to the project instead of being a drag on the bottom line.
• For industry and operating agency engineering geologists, an understanding of the immediate and downstream consequences of engineering geology practice that will improve your in-house project and budget proposals and deliverables. Management will view you as someone who adds value to the organization instead of being a drag on the bottom line.
• For regulatory engineering geologists, a new tool to use in dealing with recalcitrant owners and their consultants.
• For students, understand why your earning potential as an engineering geologist is less than that of an economic geologist. But, hey, engineering geology can be a lot more fun and more satisfying than looking for gold or oil (the reason why will be revealed).
• For professors, a fundamental insight into the nature of a career in engineering geology that you can pass on to your students so they will love and respect you even more than they do now.

* In case you don’t remember, or are too young to have seen him on TV, Rodney Dangerfield was a stand-up comedian whose tag line was “I don’t get no respect!”
• For everyone, an understanding of the history and development of the profession, the forces that drive and deny its application, and the benefits it confers on the client, the owner, and humankind. Heady stuff, but you can turn it into a sales tool that will help your career and business development.
• Tidbits: 1) What book on engineering geology was burned, and why? 2) You know that Karl Terzaghi is “the father of soil mechanics.” Who was “the father of rock mechanics?” Hint: his father was an orchestra conductor and composer, and he went to high school with a pal named Herbert Von Karajan, who later became a famed symphony orchestra conductor. He also studied piano and violin at the Mozarteum in Vienna. Is this leading somewhere? Yes, to a new insight.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Robert E. Tepel has practiced engineering geology for 46 years. His employment background includes working for 1) the Design and Construction Branch of the California Department of Water Resources, 2) W. A. Wahler & Associates, a small consulting firm specializing in earth dams, including investigation of the failure of the Buffalo Creek Dam failure in West Virginia (1972) for the U. S. Bureau of Mines and of Teton Dam (1976) for the prime contractor’s insurance company, and 3) the Santa Clara Valley Water District, which owns and operates a dozen dams and reservoirs, including one dam built athwart an actively creeping fault. His service to AEG includes officership in the San Francisco Section (1982 – 1986, Chair in 1984-86), and in the Association of Engineering Geologists (Secretary 1991 – 1992, Vice-President/President Elect, 1992 – 1993, and President 1993 – 1994). The AEG News has published 60 columns written by him under the banner “Issues in Professional Licensure for Geologists.” He founded the California Council of Geoscience Organizations in 1996. After retirement in 1999, he was appointed to the State Mining and Geology Board by Governor Gray Davis, and is currently serving the second of two additional terms as an appointee of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. He served two three-year terms on the Board of Directors of the AEG Foundation (president 2004-2006). In 2002, 2004, and 2007 he convened or co-convened professional practice symposia at AEG Annual Meetings under the theme “Visioning the Future of Engineering Geology.” In 2006, he presented a session keynote speech titled “The Core Attributes of Engineering Geology: a US Perspective” at a symposium on the future of engineering geology at the 12th IAEG Congress in Nottingham, UK. This presentation for the Sacramento Section is based on those symposia and current research, bringing together American and European traditions in engineering geology practice. It builds on the knowledge and insights of engineering geologists from around the world who have pondered about the fundamental contribution that engineering geology practice can (and sometimes does and sometimes does not) make to humankind.
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