



SAE eNEWSLETTER

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Dear Colleagues:

This issue of the 2012 SAE eNewsletter (newsletter) features information about the first joint teleconference between Minister of Public Works, Mr. Najibullah Aoudjan and his team members; representatives of Afghan Architectural and Engineering Associations; and the SAE Board of Directors and Executive Committee.

Mr. A. Manan Khalid's travel report to Afghanistan is included in this issue.

There is an article about partnership between the University of Hartford and Herat University.

A new section entitled, "A Glance at Books and Publications" is added to inform readers about the availability of valuable Afghanistan related engineering books and publications. There are

updates related to UNESCO Fellowship program, SAE Membership Committee report, including members' promotions and retirements.

Please do not hesitate to contact us, if you have any questions or comments. Your comments, suggestions, and opinions always count. I hope that you find the newsletter interesting and useful.

Very Truly Yours,

Ghulam Mujtaba

G. Mujtaba, MS- CE,
P.E., CPM
Editor- In- Chief,
SAE eNewsletter

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"The newsletter features information about the first joint teleconference between Minister of Public Works, Mr. Najibullah Aoudjan and his team members;.....; with the Society of Afghan Engineers Executive Committee and Board of Directors."

GREETINGS FROM THE SAE PRESIDENT

Dear Members of the Society of Afghan Engineers:

The leaders of a few Committees/Subcommittees have been appointed. It is their responsibilities to involve other volunteer members in advancement of their committee and subcommittee activities. It is expected that that all members join as member of one of the Society committees or subcommittees.

During their travels to Afghanistan, a few SAE members extended their stay in Kabul to meet with university professors at Kabul University and other professionals of the governmental agencies. They exchanged their experience with each other, conducted lectures, and offered trainings at the area of their expertise. Mr. A. Manan Khalid's report includes information about his technical activities during his travel to Afghanistan.

We are pleased to inform you that the SAE President and Board of Directors of the Society of Afghan Engineers (SAE) held teleconference with H. E. Dip. Eng. Mr. Najibullah Aoudjan, Minister of Public Works and his team members on May 1, 2012. The team members from Afghanistan included representatives of architectural and engineering Societies. During the meeting, Afghanistan's technical needs, especially in the area of roadway and bridge designs were discussed. The second step in this process is the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding related to the cooperation between the Ministry of Public Works and the Society of Afghan Engineers. Accordingly, the Society members in their field of expertise prepare their goals and future plans to perform the required cooperation.

The two professional members of the Society of Afghan Architects and Engineers (SAAE), Ms. Dalia Akbarmir and Professor Jamil Khalid, from Afghanistan visited US engineering design and construction offices, construction sites, societies, and institutes. Their visits were arranged through the UNESCO Fellowship program. The American Society of Civil Engineers and the Society of Afghan Engineers coordinated their program by making arrangements with educational and engineering societies that they visited. Afghan professionals from DC metro areas voluntarily assisted in this program to accompany the two guests during their visits to different institutes.

I congratulate Dr. Mohammad Humayon Qayoumi, an SAE member, on his new position as the President at San José State University. I wish him great success in his new position.

Very Truly Yours,

Ghulam Mujtaba

G. Mujtaba, MS- CE, P.E., CPM

President, the Society of Afghan Engineers

Responses to Readers' Comments

Comments from Engineer Abdullah Qadir

Herat Afghanistan

Dear Ustad!

First of all accept my good willing and sincere regards. I went through the newsletter I found it very useful. I am very happy to have communication with you and your team. I sent you my application but I didn't get any feedback from you.

About the topic sent by our Afghan colleague to open an office of SAE in Kabul I don't agree with that for the time being.....

The second one is the registration of engineering companies in Afghanistan and code development. Companies are registered by Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA)..... This will also not be suitable for the time being.

Third is the training of the SAE members if we start training here in Afghanistan..... . If possible to conduct short course training outside Afghanistan and select the most appropriate engineers and even qualified technicians. That will help the society very much.

This is my suggestion if I am wrong please correct me.

With very best regard

Eng. Abdullah Qadir
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Responses:

Dear Engineer Sahib Qadir,

We are very pleased to know that you are receiving the SAE eNewsletter regularly and thanks for providing us suggestions regarding the improvement of the Society of Afghan Engineers (SAE). The Executive Committee members of the Society of Afghan Engineers are also very pleased that they have had correspondence with you.

In responses to your inquiries, comments, and suggestions, I offer the following:

1- I am very pleased to know that you have received the April issue of the SAE eNewsletter and found it very useful. It is an honor that we receive valuable comments and suggestion from our experienced

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engineers from Afghanistan. I have copied the SAE eNewsletter Editorial Board, Board of Directors, and Executive committee for their information.

2- You have indicated that you sent your application for SAE membership and you didn't receive our responses. I received your application for membership in the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). I forwarded your application to them and they acknowledged the receipt of your application. Please send ASTM an email regarding the status of your application.

3- I am sorry that we have not received your application for SAE membership. If you are interested to become a member of the Society of Afghan Engineers, please complete the attached SAE application form and send it to Mr. Sarwary, Chairman of the SAE Membership Committee with a copy to Mr. Durani, SAE Secretary. I have copied them on this email. Their email addresses are:

Luis Durani durani2424@gmail.com

M.Saber Sarwary: SSarwary@redwoodcity.org

Please attach a copy of your educational certificates along with your application. It should be noted that there is no application fee or membership renewal fee for those members who are living in Afghanistan.

4. You have addressed the issue of an SAE office in Afghanistan, registration of Afghan Engineers, and training. We greatly value your suggestions. Thanks for expressing your ideas.

These are the issues that were suggested by Mr. Alozai and I provided responses to his comments. It is the long-term goal of the Society to open an office in Kabul to be of more help in the reconstruction activities of Afghanistan. But, it requires budget. The SAE is not ready at this time for any of these activities.

The registration of Afghan professionals should be in accordance with Afghan Government rules and regulations. Accordingly, the SAE will be pleased to provide any technical assistance that may be needed. But, the Society of Afghan Engineers is not a certification agency. The Society members can arrange for trainings of any private or governmental agencies that need the training inside or outside Afghanistan. Because of the budget issues, the Society at this time is not in the position to offer scholarships or fellowships to our colleagues in Afghanistan. It is long-term goal of Society to offer such scholarships to Afghan engineering/architectural Students in future.

Thanks again for your valuable suggestions.

Best regards,

Ghulam Mujtaba, M.S, CE, P.E, CPM

President, the Society of Afghan Engineers

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Note: It should be noted that only the highlights of Mr. Qadir's email of April 2, 2012 are included in the SAE eNewsletter. We are pleased to let you know that, after the aforementioned correspondence, the Society received Mr. Qadir's membership application. His membership has been approved. The report of the Membership Committee is included in this issue of the newsletter. Mr. Qadir's biography is part of the membership Committee's report.

"It is long-term goal of Society to offer such scholarships to Afghan engineering/architectural Students in future."

Technical News from Afghanistan

In this issue of the newsletter the following two reports are included:

- Report of a joint teleconference between the Officers of the Society of Afghan Engineers (SAE) and Minister of Public Works of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan;
- Reports of SAE members related their travel, capacity building activities, and discussions with architectural and engineering professionals in Afghanistan.

Joint Teleconference of the SAE President and Board of Directors with H. E. Dip. Eng. Mr. Najibullah Aoudjan, Minister of Public Works of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and his team members

The President and Board of Directors of the Society of Afghan Engineers (SAE) held teleconference with H. E. Dip. Eng. Mr. Najibullah Aoudjan, Minister of Public Works and his team members from Afghanistan. The meeting started at 10:00 PM, on Tuesday, May 1, 2012, (USA Eastern time), which is equivalent to 6:30 AM, Wednesday, May 2, 2012, Kabul time. This was a special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Society of Afghan Engineers (SAE), which was held jointly by participants from Afghanistan and USA.

The following are the lists of the meeting attendees from Kabul and USA.

Meeting Attendees from Kabul: The meeting attendees were H. E. Dip. Eng. Mr. Najibullah Aoudjan, Minister of Public Works and his team members, including: Dr. Eng. Ahmad Shah Wahid, Eng. Noor Goul Mangal, Eng. Abdul Jamil Hares, Mr. Qais Sharaf, Mr. Mohammad Salim Beedia, Eng. Abdul Rahof, Eng. Ali Hosin Hosini, Eng. Mohammad Qasim Salik, Eng. Abdul Qahar, Mr. Abdul Satar Rahofi, Mr. Mir Ahmad Ahmadi, Mr. Abdul Hamid Layan, Mr. Patyal Gurzang, Mr. M. Sohil Kaakar, Mr. Ahmad Balal Popal, Mr. Bashir Ahmad Mohsin, Mr. Mohammad Amin, Mr. Azar Hidayat Rostaqi, Eng. Yama Yari, Mr. Abdul Samad Yadgari, Mr. Omar Khan Azizi, Mr. Mohammad Arif Rasoli, Mr. Naim Jan, Mr. Asadullah Oryakhil, Mr. M. Mirwais, Mr. Hakim Gul Ahamadi, Dr. Sayid Sharif Hosini, Dr. Zabahullah Majaddidy, Mr. Abdul Najeeb Ahadi, Engineer Sadiq, and Mr. Mohammad Amin Azimi.

Meeting attendance from USA: The SAE President, Mr. Ghulam Mujtaba; and Board of Directors, Mr. M. Q. Kadir, Dr. Abdul Hamid Farid Kazi, Mr. Abdul Manan Khalid, Dr. A. Saboor Rahim, Mr. Amanullah Mommandi, Mr. Mohammed Hashim Rayek, Dr. Y.M. Ebadi, Mr. M.Najib Poya, and Dr. M. Saleh Keshawarz.

Purpose of the Meeting

The purpose of the meeting of the Society of Afghan Engineers (SAE) with the Ministry of Public Works (MOPW) of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was to enhance the ability of the two agencies to support the reconstruction activities of infrastructures of the Afghanistan. The enhancement of activities may include the SAE's assistance with MOPW in the development of Afghan national specifications, standards, and codes. The types of assistance depend on the MOPW's priorities and SAE volunteers who will participate in this program. Upon concurrence with agreement of the two agencies, the SAE and MOPW members will exchange their ideas and explore cooperation opportunities for the development in areas of mutual interest; promote communication

and knowledge between the two organizations; thus greater participation of SAE members into the reconstruction activities of Afghanistan.

Presentations and Discussions

At the beginning of the meeting, H.E. Minister Aoudjan addressed the teleconference attendees by expressing his greetings. He mentioned that the Ministry is facing different types of technical deficiencies. Since he is representative of the engineering and architectural associations in the Ministry of Public Works, he expects that the associations support the Ministry in the solution process of these shortcomings. He added that there is no need to address all problems at this time, but, he outlined a few of those needed items and the highlights of his suggestions, as follows:

- It is important to have norms and standards for the design, construction, and maintenance of roadways and bridges.
- The training of personnel in the current methods of the roadway and bridge designs.
- Increased level of communication between the personnel of the Ministry and the Society of Afghan Engineers for the purpose of exchanging their experience, ideas, trainings programs, and solution to problems.
- It is the long-term goal of the Ministry to employ the SAE members to work in Afghanistan. The Ministry will try to make necessary arrangements during their stay in Afghanistan. The implementations of the updated quality control methods of the materials for durability of roadways and are needed.
- The constructions of more toll facilities are needed.
- The constructions of weigh stations with high quality scales are needed.

Subsequent to Minister's speech, Dr. Zabi Mojaddidy, Engineer Hakim Gul Ahmadi, Engineer Arif, Engineer Oria, Engineer Noor Gul Mangal, Engineer Sadiq, and Dr. Sayid Sharif Hosini, and SAE members in USA provided their brainstorming ideas, recommendations, and suggestions.

The SAE President expressed the need for improvement in the activities in Afghanistan, especially in the Ministry of Public Works. He suggested formation of a liaison Subcommittee between SAE and MOPW to regularly meet and determine the technical needs of Afghanistan.

The following are the highlights of the brain storming ideas that were presented by attendees related to the possibility of SAE's involvement in each of these areas:

- The development of the plan, design, construction, and maintenance activities of roadway and bridge projects. These may include the specifications for construction of infrastructures, quality control, quality assurance, and management of projects.
- Development of codes and preparation of guidelines for their implementations.
- Guidelines related to the enforcement of codes, standards, and specifications.
- Training of professionals in the areas of design and its quality assurance activities.
- The development of environmental norms.
- The establishments of central testing laboratory for performing of materials testing and evaluation of other laboratories through the country.
- The establishment of an MIS system for the Ministry of Public Works facilities.
- Guidelines for quality control and evaluation of the contractor's work.

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- Preparation of the guidelines for evaluation of works of consultants and designers.
- Preparation of the list of qualified consultants, designers, and contractors.
- The establishment of the Department of Professional Regulations.
- The development of the Afghan materials testing and specifications.

The detailed discussions and brainstorming ideas of the SAE, MOPW, and other attendees are included in the minutes of joint meeting that were disseminated by MOPW and SAE.

Conclusion

It was decided that MOPW will maintain an increased level of communication with the Society of Afghan Engineers for exchanging their experience, ideas, and training programs.

The Travel Reports and Engineering activities of SAE Members in Afghanistan

The SAE administration is urging their members whenever they are traveling to Afghanistan, if possible, they should extend their travel programs to meet with their colleagues, share their technical experience, and present the required trainings in the areas of their expertise.

This year Mr. Manan Khalid and Mr. Amanullah Mommandi traveled to Afghanistan and in accordance with SAE's policy they extended their travel plan to be available for technical discussions, presentations, site visits, and meetings with their professional colleagues during their stay in Kabul. The following article is Mr. Khalid's travel report, which includes his technical activities in Afghanistan.

A Trip to Afghanistan

Reported By: A. Manan Khalid, PE, LEED AP

*Mr. Abdul Manan Khalid is a member of the Board of Directors of the Society of Afghan engineer and an Editor of SAE eNewsletter. He has graduated from the Department of Civil Engineering of the Faculty of Engineering in January of 1981. He finished his Masters Degree in the field of Hydrology in the fall of 1984, and was awarded university's **Gold Medal** for his work. He also completed post graduate studies in the field of Infrastructural Rehabilitation at Polytechnic University and Leadership at Baruch College, both in New York.*

Mr. Khalid was a professor at the Faculty of Engineering of Kabul University, and later on worked in many project management capacities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He has also worked as Lead Bridge Inspector with NYCDOT; Assistant Chief Structural Engineer and Administrative Engineer with NYC Housing Authority, and is currently working as Managing Engineer, with the Department of Architecture and Engineering at NYC School Construction Authority. He is a Professional Engineer in the State of New York and a LEED Accredited Professional in Building Design and Construction.



Introduction

This year, I spent the last three weeks of the month of May in our beloved Country, Afghanistan. During part of my

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trip, from May 10-31, 2012, I conducted training at the Minister of Energy and Water (MEW) under a World Bank Funded Capacity Building Project. Since 2004, the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW) has been implementing a World Bank funded Emergency Irrigation Rehabilitation Project (EIRP). The project supports activities that are designed to improve livelihood opportunities in the rural areas through a rehabilitated irrigation system and improved management of national water resources. One of the components of this project is “Institutional Development and Capacity Building” and as part of its Capacity Building efforts, MEW has been arranging various short term In-Country training courses, as the one I conducted. These trainings are always conducted by Individual Consultants/Trainers.

The duration is divided into home based preparation and training to be conducted in Kabul. The home based part of this training is for preparing the training manual/material. The Kabul based part is full time classroom training through the use of modern training tools and methodology and includes adequate interaction with the participants and practical examples/case studies of important related activities.

After passing through the required qualification process, I was selected to conduct nine-day training on construction management and construction monitoring and evaluation in Kabul. During my stay in Kabul, in addition to the training conducted at the MEW, I also did the following:

- Conducted a half day seminar at the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) on Project Management with emphasis on Quality Control
- Participated in a one day trip to Salang Tunnel at the request of His Excellency the Minister of MPW. SAE Board member, Mr. Mommandi was also part of this trip.
- Attended the Society of Afghan Architects and Engineers (SAAE) meeting held at Kabul City Municipality
- Met with Kabul Mayor
- Had a brief meeting with the dean and faculty of the Faculty of Engineering and conducted a two hour seminar to the senior students of the Departments of Civil Engineering and Architecture.

The Training at MEW

The training at MEW was conducted from May 13th through May 23rd of this year and had two parts; **construction project management** and **construction projects monitoring and evaluation**. It was delivered in Kabul to 53 participants, some of whom had civil engineering background. Most of the others had agriculture and irrigation background. The participants were from Kabul and other regions throughout Afghanistan. The trainings were conducted in Dari, Pashto and at time in English. MEW provided lecture room, the necessary equipment, including transportation and lunch for all attendees.

The training was officially inaugurated by his Excellency, Eng. Mohammad Sami, the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Energy and Water. During the inauguration, Mr. Sayed Sharief Shobair, Chief Engineer, Mr. Mirwais Mirzad, Director of Project Coordination Unit, Mr. Teame Tewolde-Berhan, M&E Specialist FAO-EIRP and a good number of other higher ranking officials of the Ministry were present. The goal was to improve their knowledge and understanding of managing, monitoring and evaluating construction projects.



Photo 1: The inauguration ceremony: center: Eng. Mohammad Sami, Deputy Minister, MEW; center right: Mr. Sayed Sharief Shobair, Chief Engineer; center left: Manan Khalid and Mr. Teame Tewolde-Berhan, M&E Specialist FAO-EIRP

During the first five days, under the topic of construction project management, the following topics were covered:

- Construction management and construction project management, the advantages and disadvantages of each
- The cornerstones of project management, scope, cost, time and quality management
- Operation research and linear programming and their use in construction management,
- Project planning
- Project scheduling and scheduling techniques, Gantt chart, Critical Path Method(CPM), Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) which is the probabilistic approach to network scheduling and practical examples related to all three techniques

Under the topic of Construction Monitoring and Evaluation the following topics were covered:

- Monitoring risk and uncertainties
- Monitoring cost, time and quality
- Forecasting time and monitoring and controlling time overruns
- Baseline schedule and their importance in monitoring time
- Causes of schedule derailment, crushing the schedule and other corrective actions

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- Basic evaluation criteria and the benefits of evaluations
- Data collection techniques and the analysis and reporting of the findings
- Evaluation plan worksheet and the challenges in monitoring and evaluation

Afternoon of the 9th day was set aside for the certificate ceremony. After brief speeches by His Excellency the Deputy Minister for Water, Mr. Shojaudin Ziaie and Chief Engineer Mr. Sayed Sharief Shobair, the certificates were distributed to the attendees. Mr. Mirwais Mirzad, Director of Project Coordination Unit also took part in handing out the certificates.



Photo 2: The certificates presentation ceremony: Left to right: Deputy Minister for Water, Mr. Shojaudin Ziaie; Mr. Mirwais Mirzad, Director of Project Coordination Unit; Mr. Sayed Sharief Shobair, Chief Engineer and an attendee)



Photo 3: Group Picture

Recommendations:

At the conclusion of the training, the following recommendations were made:

1. Since most of the attendees cannot comprehend properly in English language, all future training should be delivered either in Dari or Pashto. This will need hiring Afghans to conduct the trainings.
2. From discussions with the attendees, it was understood that the currently used project specifications are not adequate. It requires establishing detailed standard specifications using Construction Specification Institute (CSI) format and then tailoring the standard specification to fit specific projects.
3. For each training project, the selection of the participants should be based on the prerequisite courses their relevant experience in order to understand the training.
4. A comprehensive quality control training is recommended as a follow up to this training.
5. Future training should have field visits and on the job training part of the training program.
6. A training on construction contracts and change management procedures, including supplemental agreement, proper identification of change order work and change order paperwork is recommended.
7. Procurement and use of construction management/contract management software is recommended.

Conclusions:

Construction management, monitoring and evaluation are vital topics in today's construction activities in Afghanistan. With the booming construction industry, these vital topics need to be properly understood and put to use. Time and cost overruns are rampant in the projects and the rapid deterioration of finished projects is an indicator of poor quality of work. Scheduling and cost control techniques which were taught in the class, if used effectively, will alleviate the time and cost overruns. To effectively control quality, a quality control plan is needed for every project.

Monitoring, which is a continuous or periodic review and surveillance of the projects, at every level of their implementation is a vital necessity. During the process of monitoring, shortfalls, deviations, problems and causes are identified in order to take appropriate remedial/corrective action before it is too late.

Lastly, the assessment of the End Results or the Impact of a project with reference to the objectives set in the project is very important. **Knowing why a project succeeds or fails is more important than knowing what it has done**, and this fact requires evaluating completed projects. Evaluation provides answers to crucial questions and helps the team to identify the strengths and weaknesses, merits and demerits. A good and comprehensive evaluation will bring out what is good/ bad about the project, what are the direct and indirect benefits and what are the intended and un-intended outcomes. Evaluation helps to refine the planning tools and thereby better plan the future projects.

Salang Tunnel Feasibility Study

Mr. Fredric S Berger, Chairman of the Louis Berger Group, Inc (LBG) has informed the Society of Afghan Engineers (SAE) by email that USAID has engaged LBG and Tetra Tech to perform the feasibility study of Salang Tunnel in order to find solution to its current congestion problem.

In his email to SAE, Mr. Berger has mentioned that the feasibility study is expected to be completed before the end of 2012 and will examine tunnel rehabilitation options and roadway alternatives to connect Kabul to the North of Afghanistan. At the study's conclusion, LBG and its partner will provide USAID their recommendation for most efficient, technically sound, and economically viable option. The feasibility study will also include the estimated timeframe for completion of work and cost estimates of each considered option. If the option requires closure of the Tunnel for rehabilitation, the study will also consider the economic impacts resulting from this closure during the estimated construction period. Mr. Berger has indicated that LBG and Tetra Tech are still in the process of identifying the alternatives that will be evaluated. The following alternatives are under consideration at this early stage of the project:

- Rehabilitation of the existing Tunnel and galleries
- Rehabilitation of the existing Tunnel and galleries and increasing capacity of the Tunnel Rehabilitation of the existing Tunnel and galleries and construction of a new tunnel in the proximity of the existing one
- Rehabilitation of the existing tunnel and galleries and construction of a new tunnel in lower pass
- Construction of an alternative route that does not include a tunnel

Contingent upon approval from USAID, LBG is planning to partner with the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) and give a presentation on the AUAF campus in Kabul to describe how they are planning to approach the analysis of the Salang tunnel feasibility study.

Pending USAID's approval, LBG will deliver the presentation in early August. During their presentations, there will be interactive discussions. It is expected that SAE members with other interested personnel attend the presentation sessions.

The President of the Society of Afghan Engineers (SAE) has informed LBG that SAE will provide any assistance in conducting this important project.

Mr. Berger has thanked the SAE President for his response and offer of assistance.

The LBG's point of contact for this initiative is Mr. Dan Grey, Vice President of LBG. Further information will be provided as it gets closer to this presentation date.

Partnership between the University of Hartford and Herat University

By: Mohammad Saleh Keshawarz, PE, PhD

Dr. Mohammad Saleh Keshawarz is a Full Professor and former Chair of the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department at the University of Hartford in West Hartford, Connecticut, USA.

Dr. Keshawarz was awarded his Ph.D. by the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma with special emphasis on Geotechnical Engineering and minors in Math and Geology. He received his Master's degree in Civil Engineering from Tennessee State University in Nashville, TN., and B.S. degree in Civil Engineering from Kabul University in Kabul, Afghanistan. Dr. Keshawarz has over twenty five years of university level, teaching, research, and consulting in geotechnical and in water resources areas of civil engineering. He is a Registered Professional Engineer in the states of Connecticut (active) and Virginia (inactive).



Dr. Keshawarz has been actively involved in the reconstruction activities in Afghanistan. He wrote the first water sector assessment on Afghanistan for USAID and served as a senior advisor to USAID on water issues. He led a team of international experts to assess soil and water in Afghanistan. He spearheaded attempts at resurrecting civil engineering education in Afghanistan and is currently leading a cooperative effort between Herat University and University of Hartford, through which engineering education at Herat University is revitalized.

Dr. Keshawarz has led short courses and workshop on water management, shifting sand stabilization, flood management, and drought management in Afghanistan.

Dr. Keshawarz has traveled widely in the Central Asian region and is intimately familiar with the region. He was selected as a member of a team of scientists from the American National Academy of Sciences to visit the water resources facilities of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. He has been to Afghanistan many times working on a variety of assignments. He knows the region well and speaks several regional languages.

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the key infrastructure components needed to sustain peaceful development and maintaining security so that the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan can meet the critical needs of its people and as well as participate fully in the international community. Higher education, in particular, engineering education, is at a crucial crossroad and a comprehensive and functional higher education system for engineering students will provide Afghanistan with the technical capacity to develop in-country infrastructure as well as to expand its role in the international community.

Collaboration with foreign universities, under the framework of the Strengthening Higher Education Program (SHEP), was formed by the Ministry of Higher Education, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and was funded by the World Bank. As a result, the partnership between the University of Hartford (UH) in West Hartford, Connecticut, USA, and Herat University (HU) in Herat City, Afghanistan was initiated in August 2007 to develop and implement a modern program to strengthen and modernize engineering education at HU. The program included a number of activities such as curriculum review and revision, faculty development, and laboratory upgrading.

Under the partnership, junior HU faculty members, who had only a bachelor's degree, applied to enroll in the master's degree program at the University of Hartford and worked toward obtaining their master's degrees. Earning this graduate degree will enable Herat faculty to be better teachers as well as be better prepared to implement curriculum revisions. More qualified faculty will also attract better students and will provide the groundwork to expand curriculum to other engineering majors.

BACKGROUND OF THE HERAT/HARTFORD COLLABORATION

Engineering education as a formal pursuit began in Afghanistan with the establishment of the Faculty of Engineering at Kabul University in 1956. That program flourished for over two decades in partnership with various foreign universities and government agencies. In 1984, five years after the Soviet invasion, the faculty was dispersed. Many left the country. A number of these faculty members established an engineering program in Peshawar, Pakistan, which in 1995 was transferred to Herat in Western Afghanistan. The program was officially incorporated as part of HU in 2002.

Since the transfer of the engineering program to Herat in 1995, a total of 625 civil engineers have graduated, including 43 women. Currently there are 635 students enrolled in three disciplines of engineering, Civil, Architecture, and Mechatronics.

A partnership with the goal of improving engineering education at Herat University was signed between the two universities in 2007. The goal of modernizing engineering education at Herat was achieved through a two-phase effort.

- Phase I, concentrated on developing the professional capacity of junior and senior faculty and upgrading the existing program and curriculum.
- Phase II, concentrated on establishing two new bachelor's degree programs: Architecture and Mechatronics.

These activities, which were not mutually exclusive, were pursued concurrently.

Achievements

Phase I Project Activities

The project activities under Phase I concentrated on upgrading the existing engineering program at HU.

The engineering curriculum at HU was outdated and contained too many credit hours for a four-year degree in engineering. The Civil Engineering curriculum has been updated, approved by HU, and has been phased in. This curriculum in terms of its content and coverage is at par with typical American engineering curricula. All engineering courses at HU are designed such that they are transferable to the University of Hartford as equivalent courses.

For faculty development, the full-time engineering faculty members were divided into two groups, junior faculty who were pursuing master's degree training, and senior faculty whose training was limited to shadowing activities at University of Hartford.

In this step, a senior faculty member from HU shadowed a University of Hartford engineering faculty member. The Dean of Engineering at HU (the senior faculty) spent a month at University of Hartford in September/November 2008 and another month in September 2009. He shadowed the Associate Dean of Engineering at University of Hartford. Shadowing activities included:

1. Observation of engineering classes at different levels.
2. Supervised assistance teaching a variety of engineering courses to develop a variety of pedagogical models and options;
3. Developing course(s) for HU, particularly in an electronic/computer-based classroom or for distance learning environment. One point of emphasis is the development of future shared projects between University of Hartford and HU students.
4. Observation, study, and practice of administrative and management skills, including ongoing faculty and curriculum development and revision.
5. Skill acquisition and practice for managing and completing the assessment process.
6. Academic advising.

In addition to classroom observation, the senior faculty member was able to assist and/or co-teach a class with a University of Hartford professor.

Under the partnership program eighteen junior faculty were sent abroad to pursue their masters degrees. Seventeen to Hartford and one who was not able to obtain a US visa was sent to the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Bangkok. The ones sent to Hartford attended intensive English preparatory courses followed by their respective master's degree program courses. Twelve pursued master's degrees in civil engineering, two (female professors) in civil/architecture and three in mechanical/mechatronics. The professor who was sent to AIT also followed a graduate program in civil engineering. Of the eighteen who were sent abroad, sixteen returned back to Herat University and are teaching full time.

While at University of Hartford, University of Hartford junior faculty also:

- Shadowed Hartford professors during the academic year,
- Developed on-line courses, to be used at University of Hartford , under the supervision of a University of Hartford professor.
- Participated in a project related to Afghanistan.

To further enhance the quality of the partnership, engineering faculty members from the University of Hartford traveled to HU during University of Hartford summer term (second semester University of Hartford) and/or as part of a leave or sabbatical. Their role was to:

- co-teach courses at HU,

A QUARTERLY UPDATE FROM THE SOCIETY OF AFGHAN ENGINEERS

- assist in curriculum revision,
- provide ongoing faculty enrichment,
- conduct research,
- help develop an assessment process, and
- provide refresher courses.

These activities were accomplished through co-teaching courses and through conducting seminars, workshops and short courses.

Another component of the University of Hartford to HU partnership was working to establish joint senior design projects through different initiatives at University of Hartford. These joint design projects will be established via distance learning, and will be led by faculty from University of Hartford, HU, and individuals from Connecticut industry.

The distance learning facility at HU with teleconferencing capabilities is ready to be used for this purpose; however, the internet connection is not sufficient to support joint projects at this time. With the establishment of the campus wide fiber optic program funded by NATO NIG program at Herat University in the near future, such joint projects will be undertaken.

Computers have been placed in the library for access to digital library resources such as engineering and academic research databases through the e-Quality alliance (funded by USAID). This resource is available at this time on a limited basis and once the fiber optics network is operational, they will be used more widely by students and faculty.

Laboratory facilities at HU include:

- Soil laboratory
- Asphalt laboratory
- Concrete and metals laboratory
- Surveying laboratory
- Hydraulics laboratory
- Computer laboratories

University of Hartford assisted HU in integrating laboratory experience with theoretical and textbook learning throughout the curriculum.

Computer tables have been purchased and are set up in the third-floor computer lab and second-floor library of the engineering building.

PHASE II: ADDITIONAL PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Significant progress has been made in the expansion of program offering at HU. The new Architecture and Mechatronics fields have been inaugurated and the first batch of students has been admitted into these fields in 2010.

Expanding the engineering curriculum to areas beyond civil engineering that are critical for continued development of infrastructure and capacity in Afghanistan has already begun.

An undergraduate program that develops practicing architectural experts fits well with the interests of HU and the City of Herat and can help meet the need for orderly rebuilding of the city's infrastructure. About 20 existing civil engineering courses (approximately two years' worth) will be shared between the Architecture and Civil Engineering programs.

Development of the architecture program also conforms to the Ministry of Higher Education's goal of increasing enrollment of female students. A complete (four-year) curriculum for the Architecture program was developed by University of Hartford and submitted to HU and is adopted by HU. A studio with tables and equipment, and PC Lab was also established for the architecture program.

Mechatronics combines the strengths of electrical and mechanical engineering, and graduates from a mechatronics program function well in both the mechanical and electrical engineering job markets. Students in such a program can select courses to emphasize either electrical or mechanical engineering, or both. Of particular benefit to HU, an undergraduate mechatronics program is an alternative to separate electrical or mechanical engineering programs and will greatly augment the current offerings in civil engineering. A complete curriculum for a Mechatronics Engineering was developed by University of Hartford and submitted to and is adopted by HU. Two laboratory rooms with equipment were also established for this program.

Five HU engineering graduates were nominated to be trained at University of Hartford for assuming faculty positions in Architecture and Mechatronics programs. Of the five, three were trained in Mechatronics and two in Architecture. The Mechatronics group spent two years at University of Hartford -one year devoted to taking any needed undergraduate courses to prepare them for graduate level work, and a second year to work toward a master's degree in Mechanical Engineering/Mechatronics.

In a similar manner, the Architecture group (two faculty members) spent a total of two years at University of Hartford. However, due to limitations in the grant period, they pursued a master's degree in civil engineering with heavy emphasis on architecture. They took enough architecture courses, both undergraduate and graduate, to prepare them to teach Architecture courses at HU. Both professors completed their degree programs and returned to Herat to full time teaching.

The following labs were established as part of the implementation of phase II at HU:

- 1. Electrical Engineering (EE) Lab**
2. Echatronics Lab
3. Architecture Studio

As of now, a combined EE/Mechatronics lab, a separate Mechatronics Lab, a fully equipped Architecture Studio for 120 students and a dedicated PC-Lab for Architecture have been established.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to thank Ministry of Higher Education, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the US Agency for International Development, USAID, and the World Bank for their financial support in funding the partnership between Herat University and the University of Hartford.



Herat University Engineering Building



Herat University Faculty of Engineering, Professors- Student at University of Hartford

The third person from left is Mr. Nasir Ali Khan, the former Dean of Engineering at Herat University and fourth person in Professor Keshawarz. The rest are all teaching at Herat except one who did not go back.



Presentation Day at the University of Hartford



Dr, Mohammad Naiem Assad, Former Herat University Chancellor visiting the University of Hartford. The photo also shows President Walter Harrison of the University of Hartford (center) and Faculty and staff from Herat and Hartford.

Afghan Professional Community News from Abroad

The Afghan professional community news and other topics of interest from abroad are as follows:

Under the UNESCO Fellowship program, SAAE President and Vice President visited architectural and engineering institutes and construction project sites in USA

Professor Jamil Khalid, President, and Ms. Dalia Akbarmir, Vice President of the Society of Afghan Architects and Engineers (SAAE), visited architectural and engineering institutes and sites of the construction projects in USA. Their visits were coordinated under UNESCO Fellowship program. The objective of the UNESCO Fellowship program is to strengthen and support the professional engineering societies in Afghanistan so they may better represent the profession on matters with government and industry.

The UNESCO/State Department had involved the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) to make arrangements to bring two professionals to the United States. The ASCE asked the Society of Afghan Engineers (SAE) to provide assistance in the coordination of the program.

A QUARTERLY UPDATE FROM THE SOCIETY OF AFGHAN ENGINEERS

The Society of Afghan Architects and Engineers (SAAE) have introduced Ms. Dalia Akbarmir and Professor Jamil Khalid as candidates. The candidates traveled to Washington DC metro area and other cities and institutions of the United States from April 20 to June 5, 2012. During their stay in the Washington DC area they visited several engineering professional societies, design offices, and construction sites. The volunteer professional members of the Society of Afghan Engineers and other Afghan professionals coordinated their visits and guided the Fellows to the construction project sites and institutes in accordance with the program.

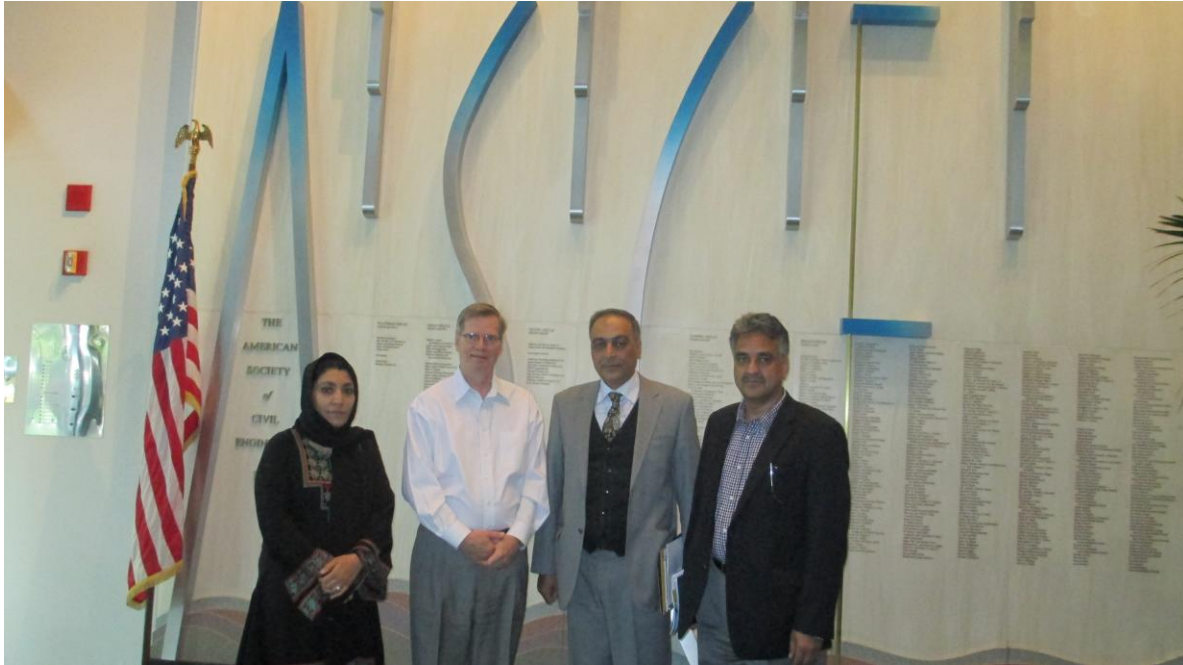
Thanks to Mr. Hamayon Ibrahim, Mr. Jalal Masumi, Mr. Atiq Panjshiri, Mr. Abdul Hadi Rakin, Mr. Hashim Rayek, Mr. Khisraw Rustam, Mr. Wali Shairzay, and Ms. Sohaila Shekib for their efforts and kindness by providing valuable technical information about their work and agencies. The President of the Society of Afghan Engineers thanked all professionals who took time from their busy schedule to provide help to our respected guests who traveled from Afghanistan to USA. Their help certainly had great contribution to the success of the program.

The following few pictures show the visit of the Fellows to ASCE and ASTM Offices. During their visit at ASCE office, Ms. Dalia Akbarmir and Professor Jamil Khilaid met with ASCE staff members, including Ms. Kay Hathaway, ASCE; Mr. Thomas W. Smith III, ESQ, ASCE, CAE (ASCE's Deputy Executive Director and General Counsel); Mr. Mike Sanio M.ASCE, CAE, Director, Sustainability and International Alliances. During their meetings Mr. A. Hadi Rakin, P.E. former SAE President was also present.



The visit of the UNESCO Fellows with ASCE: From left to right Ms. Dalia Akbarmir, Ms. Kay Hathaway, Mr. Mike Sanio, and Prof. Jamil Khalid

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The visit of the UNESCO Fellows with ASCE- From left to right: Ms. Dalia Akbarmir, Mr. Mike Sanio, Professor Jamil Khloid, and Mr. A. Hadi Rakin.



The visit of the UNESCO Fellows with ASCE- From left: Professor Jamil Khloid, Mr. Thomas W. Smith III, Mr. Mike Sanio, Mr. A. Hadi Rakin, and Ms. Dalia Akbarmir. The Fellows presented the SAAE plaque to ASCE members.

The UNESCO Fellows also visited American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Office in Washington DC on Friday April 27, 2012. During their visit, Ms. Naouri, Manager, Global Cooperation

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of ASTM International, provided the UNESCO Fellows information about ASTM and they have discussed about Afghanistan's roadway and infrastructure reconstruction activities. Ms. Naouri has provided information about ASTM Committees, especially the Committee D 04 on Road and Paving Materials. She has also sent them follow up email with a copy of ASTM Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) membership application form.

Professor Khalid and Ms. Akbarmir indicated that they have found their meeting with Ms. Naouri, to be a productive meeting. They have enjoyed their discussions with Ms. Naouri and types of cooperation that they received from ASTM. They thanked Ms. Naouri and Mr. Jim Olshefsky who made the arrangement so that the Fellows could visit ASTM office in Washington DC.

On behalf of the Society of Afghan Engineers, the SAE President has sent Ms. Naouri a thank you note for her graciousness and courtesy. Ms. Naouri has responded to thank the President for his note and has mentioned that she hopes that ASTM standards will help in supporting the building initiatives in Afghanistan and she is looking forward to future cooperation with the Society of Afghan Engineers as well as Afghan government and industry.



Professor Jamil Khalid, SAAE President, Ms. Dalia Akbarmir, SAE Vice President, and Ms. Sarah Naouri, ASTM Staff Member

Volunteers are needed to serve in the following SAE Committees/Subcommittees

The leaders and counselors of a few committees/subcommittees have been approved by the Board of Directors. More volunteers are needed to serve in the following Committees/Subcommittees:

- Finance Committee
- Capacity Building and Academic Development Subcommittee
- Conference and Training Subcommittee
- Student Subcommittee
- Advisory Subcommittee
- Publications Subcommittee
- Website Development and Maintenance Subcommittee
- Roadway and Bridge Design and Specifications Subcommittee
- Materials Specifications and Test Methods Subcommittee
- Environmental Engineering Subcommittee
- Afghan Professional Regulations Subcommittee

Please contact the Chairpersons of the SAE President, Ghulam Mujtaba at Email: mujtabaghulam@bellsouth.net if you are interested to serve as an SAE Committee/Subcommittee leader.

A Glance at Books and Publications

At this Section of the newsletter the reviews of the architectural, engineering, and management books and publications will be included. The reviews will include information about the publications that are Afghanistan related or other publications that reviewers may find useful for the architects and engineers in Afghanistan. The reviewers can write a summary of the books and publication that they have read and share their reviews with the readers of the SAE eNewsletter.

In this issue we will include a review of a newly published book, entitled, Water Resources Development in Afghanistan and its Challenges, by Mr. Qaseem Naimi, former Water Resource Adviser of the Ministry of Energy and Water of Afghanistan. The Editor of the SAE eNewsletter found the book to informative and requested the author to provide a brief summary of his book. Mr. Naimi graciously accepted his request and provided the following summary about his book:

Water Resources Development in Afghanistan and its Challenges

Author: Mr. Qaseem Naimi, former Water Resource Adviser of the Ministry of Energy and Water of Afghanistan. E-Mail: mqnaimi@yahoo.com Phone: (905) 276 1552.

Language of the Publication: Dari

Number of pages: 157 pages

Publisher: National Graphic Printers, Kabul, Afghanistan **Price:** Afs. 200 in Kabul, \$ 15.00 Plus mailing cost in other countries.

Book Abstract

By: Engineer Mohammad Qaseem Naimi

Water Resources Development in Afghanistan and its Challenges is the title of the book. It describes the history, background, land and water resources, and the present water resources conditions. The book provides future water resources potential development plan and challenges and obstacles of water sector in Afghanistan.

The author has worked more than 40 years in this field in deferent positions under various political circumstances in last four decades in Afghanistan and has thorough and comprehensive understanding of water sector in Afghanistan.

This book will be a reliable source of information and data for those who are interested in water sector in Afghanistan. The book is written in Dari (Farsi).

Water resources development in Afghanistan is very critical and risky, but very vital and important to the life and wellbeing of the people of Afghanistan. Having around 75 billion cubic meter of renewable water, the country is still suffering of lack of drinking water and having the potential of more than 25,000 megawatt of hydroelectricity power generation. The country imports electricity from neighboring countries. In Afghanistan, 85% of crops are grown on irrigated fields and agriculture is by far the most important economic activity. About 5.3 million hectare of land can be brought under irrigation. At the present time, only 1.8 million hectare is under irrigation, although it was more than 3 million hectare under irrigation before war.

Half a century ago, international aid began to support the water sector mainly through large-scale schemes and big dams. During the last few decades of war in Afghanistan, irrigation networks suffered major damages since controlling water resources was a major issue at stake, while many others fell into disrepair due to lack of maintenance. In the early 1980s, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) worked on rehabilitating irrigation systems, as well as cleaning canals and Karezes (underground canals). These activities have since become an integral part of humanitarian assistance. Beside the water infrastructures' collapse, the water sector has also to face issues related to social management of water and more global issues like the effects of the climatic changes. The vision of a peaceful and prosperous future National Development Framework relies predominantly on fair and efficient water management between domestic users and neighboring countries. In the last decade many studies and planning have been done. But due to the security problems implementation of the projects are very limited. Improved mobilization and use of available water resources together with long-term environmental and social considerations are some of the important challenges facing all stakeholders involved in Afghanistan recovery and development. Influence of the neighboring countries, especially western neighbor on the political climate of the country is one of the main obstacles in the development of water sector. International donors and financial agencies are not willing to fund the major water sector projects due to trans-boundary issues. Afghan authorities have to open the door and start negotiation on mutual basis with the neighbors, but before that they have to train a competent national team both in political and technical aspects of water resources of

the country, its consequence, importance and challenges to the wellbeing of the people of Afghanistan. For more information please contact Mr. Qaseem Naimi, former Water Resource Adviser.

Email: mqnaimi@yahoo.com

Phone: (905) 276 1552



Author's Biography

Engineer Mohammad Qaseem Naimi graduated from Habibia High school in 1941. He got his BS degree from the Faculty of Engineering, Kabul University in Mechanical Engineering in 1945 and start working in the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation in Kabul. He went for higher education in the field of Civil Engineering to the United States of America and got another BS in Civil Engineering from the University of Idaho in 1970. Returning back to his country he start work with the Irrigation and Water Resources Development Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation which later changed to Water and Power Authority and then to Ministry of water and Power. The author worked in deferent positions as design engineer, Planning Director, President of Salma Storage Dam Project, Vice President and Acting President of WAPECA and as adviser to the Ministry of Water and Power. In 1988 he became refugee to Peshawar and start working with United Nation (WFP) and FAO for the cross border irrigation rehabilitation program in the areas under the control of Mujahedeen. In 1994 he became an immigrant to Canada.

After the fall of Taliban, he was asked to join the Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority (AACAA) team in January 2002 and from 2003 to 2011 he worked as water resources adviser to the Ministry of Energy and Water of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Membership News

In this section the news about the new membership, awards, promotions, retirement and loss of the Society members will be provided.

Membership Renewal 2012

The attached form includes application for the new members and membership renewal. The application forms may be viewed at SAE website. The

members are requested to take a few minutes of their time to inform the Society by sending their updated contact information.

The completed application/renewal forms may be mailed to Mr. Jawad Ibrahim at P.O. Box 11520, Burke, Virginia 22009-1520

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

By: M. Saber Sarwary, P.E. Chairman, and Membership Committee

The following note The Society of Afghan Engineers (SAE) welcomes Mr. Abdullah Qadir, Mr. Habiburahman Hotaki and Dr. Emal Nasserri who recently joined the Society.

Mr. Qadir graduated from Faculty of Engineering Kabul, Afghanistan with a B. Sc degree in Civil Engineering in 1974 and has a master degree from Roorkee University, India in hydrology. He is currently working as the Deputy Team Leader with Sheladia consultancy for the Ministry of Energy & Water in Afghanistan.

Mr. Hotaki graduated from Faculty of Engineering Kabul, Afghanistan with a B. Sc degree in Civil Engineering in 2010 and is currently working with United Infrastructure Projects as a Structural Design Engineer in Kabul.

Dr. Emal Nasserri graduated from University of Hertfordshire, UK with B.Sc in Software Engineering and received his Ph.D from Brunel University, UK in 2009. He is working as a senior Analyst Programmer with Overton Recycling Limited and has several paper, research and publications in the field of software engineering.

Achievements and Awards

The newsletter will inform their readers of winners of awards or any other successes of Afghan professionals and students, especially, their Society members. You can help the SAE eNewsletter editors by providing the news of the achievements, award winners, and any other success stories.

“Advise us of success stories or achievements of the Society members and any Afghan professionals and students.”

In this issue the achievement of Dr. Mohammad Humayon Qayoumi, an SAE Member, will be introduced.

Dr. Mohammad Humayon Qayoumi, President at San José State University.



Dr. Mohammad Humayon Qayoumi has been appointed as the 28th president at San José State University. He will also serve as the professor of electrical engineering at the University. He holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the American University of Beirut and four degrees from the University of Cincinnati: a master's in nuclear engineering, a master's in electrical and computer engineering, an MBA and a doctorate in electrical

engineering. He has also published eight books, and more than 100 articles as well as several chapters in various books. He is a licensed professional engineer and a certified management accountant. Dr. Qayoumi served as president of California State University East Bay from 2006 to 2011. He came to Cal State East Bay from California State University Northridge, where he served as vice president for administration and finance and chief financial officer from 2000 to 2006, and was also a tenured professor of engineering management. He has over 32 years of engineering and administrative experience in several universities. Dr. Qayoumi also served as an engineer on a variety of projects in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. He has made presentations at numerous conferences across the United States and 10 other countries. A senior member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE), Qayoumi has served as a Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award examiner and senior examiner from 2000 to 2003. He also was a senior examiner for the Missouri Quality Program from 1997 to 2000.

Dr. Qayoumi has served his native country in various financial capacities. He was the senior advisor to the minister of finance of Afghanistan from 2000 to 2005 and remains on several boards of directors, including that of the Central Bank of Afghanistan.

A senior fellow with California Council on Science and Technology (CCST), President Qayoumi is also a member of several local boards, including the Bay Area Council, the Bay Area Council Economic Institute, the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Joint Venture Silicon Valley, KQED, the Commonwealth Club, Blue Shield of California and California STEM Learning Network.

Dr. Qayoumi has been married for 33 Years to Mrs. Najia Karim.

The President of the Society of Afghan Engineers sent a congratulation note to President Qayoumi and he responded to the email which reads:

SAE President's Congratulation Note:

Dear President Qayoumi:

On behalf of the Society of Afghan Engineers (SAE) I would like to take this opportunity congratulate you on your new position as the President of the San Jose State University. I was delighted to learn that one of our highly respected SAE members is appointed as 28th President of the San Jose State University. The SAE is very happy regarding your appointment. This is a well-earned promotion indeed. Your appointment in this position is the recognition of your invaluable past contributions and active involvements in the development of other academic institutes.

The San Jose State University is fortunate to have you as their President. There is no doubt that under your leadership, the expectations of the San Jose State University will be very high. We are confident that your ideas, inspiration, and leadership will lead the University to great initiatives and improvements. Please accept our best wishes for continued success and let us know if the Society of Afghan Engineers can be of any assistance.

Best regards,

Ghulam Mujtaba, M.S., CE, P.E, C.P.M
President, the Society of Afghan Engineers

President Qayoumi's Response:

Thank you for your kind note of congratulations on behalf of the Society of Afghan Engineers. I will treasure the note and the well wishes of you and our other fellow Afghan engineer colleagues.

Regards
Mohammad H. Qayoumi, Ph.D.
President
San Jose State University
One Washington Square
San Jose, CA 95192-0002
(408) 924-1177
mo.qayoumi@sjsu.edu
www.sjsu.edu

Obituary of Mr. Obaid Baktazh - AN SAE MEMBER



The following sympathy note has been sent by Shaam-e-Erfan related to the death of Mr. Baktazh:

Shaam-e-Erfan grieves and mourns over the loss of its beloved member.

Mr. Obaid Baktazh Achekzai in Kabul, Afghanistan-2010

On Saturday, May 12th, 2012, the Afghan society has lost a genuine and incomparable man. And Shaam-e-Erfan, has lost one of its finest members, **Engineer Obaid Baktazh**.

He passed away from a tragic heart attack.

On most last Fridays of the month, he would make his way to Shaam-e-Erfan with his beloved wife, to greet and give salutations to guests, putting a smile on everyone's face and to make everyone else feel happy. This was truly his aim: There is no other like him.

May God bless his soul; give his wife and his three children love, serenity, and stamina to cope with this catastrophic loss of their love one. He will be greatly missed; but his memory will be everlasting.

By: Mrs. Masuda Ranjbar and Engineer M. Hamayon Ibrahim

Mr. Obaid Baktazh Achekzai, was born on April 15, 1960 in Kolola Pushta of Kabul, Afghanistan. At the tender age of five, Mr. Achekzai lost his father due to heart attack. He and his ten siblings were raised by their beloved mother. He was living with his wife and children in Fairfax, Virginia.



Obaid with orphan children in
one of his Kabul orphan school

After finished his high school at Afghan Institute of Technology (AIT), he attended Kabul University seeking for engineering degree. Like many Afghans, Obaid was forced to flee the country due to the political turmoil at the time. He began a new life in Virginia.

In 1995, Obaid Bactazh Achekzai established his own civil engineering firm, Suburban Development Engineering, Inc. which has been in business for the past 17 years. He was one of the first members of the Society of Afghan Engineers. He was a Designated Plan Examiner (DPE) with Fairfax County and he designed numerous projects in variety of fields in the commercial, residential, environmental and government sectors. Some of his works within the Afghan Community included The Lee Highway Project – A 16 lot Subdivision built by Stanley Martin where he named the streets after Afghans, Masjid Mustafa Center in Annandale, Virginia, Bamiyan Restaurant in Falls Church, Virginia, and Cherry Blossom Restaurant in Sterling, Virginia.

Obaid had the special skill of being learned in the technical aspects of his trade, but also understanding the politics of the job. Using his knowledge and political savvy, he was able to obtain permits, waivers, and approved plans with expert tactfulness.

Obaid not only established a professional base in the US, but he also aided and started up many philanthropic endeavors in Afghanistan. He was the first person to introduce the innovative survey equipment, TOTAL STATION, to the people of Afghanistan, and he took part in many projects with many organizations.

These included The Afghan Relief Fund where he established a class to teach drafting using the AUTOCAD system, The Children of War in which he was a member of the Board of Directors and was involved in programs and projects of the organization and traveled on many of the trips to Afghanistan to visit the schools and students. He was on the board of the The Rakim Foundation where he helped meet the goals of the organization. Obaid went above and beyond with his work both in America and in his beloved homeland of Afghanistan.

Obaid had a love for film and theatre. While attending Kabul University, Obaid and a group of friends joined forces to expand Afghan television with the aid of back then Soviet Union in 1980's. The goal of these young minds was to support the growth of Afghan Television, and encourage young artists to

participate as well. He acted in many made-for-TV films alongside the love of his life, Rana Mehrabi Achekzai, who eventually became his wife in 1994. Obaid started his career in radio dramas and then moved on to television dramas and film. During this time he worked in the department of Art and Literature in the Afghan National Television. Some movies he played leading roles in include: *Together for Future (Baa Ham Barai Ayenda)*, *Consequence (Farjam)*, and *Tear and Smile, (Ashq Wa Labkhand)*

whose protagonist, **Yaqub e Chapashakh**, became one of his most famous roles. Despite his great success, Obaid was very humble with his fame, more often than not shying away from interviews and the limelight. While growing up, Obaid had a passion for fine arts. He was proficient at playing many musical instruments and he had a great love for music. He read literature, wrote poetry, excelled in art, and tried his hand at sculpting. Over the years he created many paintings, and although encouraged by family and friends to exhibit his work, he only wanted to paint for leisure. Many of his beautiful paintings adorn the walls of his home.

Obaid lived on through his children and their talents in which they excel at. All of his children share his love of music, art, and education. Obaid's daughter, Tahmina, not only attends Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, one of the top schools in the country, but she is also a best artist, pianist and ice-skate figure in her young age. Likewise the other two young sons are accomplished scholars and are talented pianists and athletes.

Obaid Bactazh Achekzai was a man of great heart, great means, and great humility. His legacy will live on in the hearts and lives of the loved ones he has left behind. He died at age 52 on May12, 2012 and buried in Mount Comfort Cemetery in Virginia. He is survived by his wife, Rana Mehrabi Achekzai, daughter Tahmina Susan Achekzai (16), and his two sons, Billal Ahmad Achekzai (15) and Rubeel Mansoor Achekzai (9).



Stanley Martin subdivision in Fairfax, VA. Designed by Obaid Bactazh Acheckzai



Part of the Stanley Martin subdivision, Rona Pl was named after his beloved wife.

Retirement of an SAE Member

Mr. Ghulam Mujtaba retired from Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) on June 30, 2012. He was working as the State Prestressed Concrete Engineer during last 12 years of his work with FDOT. During his 24 years of his employment with FDOT, he worked as District 2 Concrete Engineer, Construction Project Engineer/Engineer, State Concrete Materials Engineer, and State Prestressed Concrete Engineer.

THE SOCIETY OF AFGHAN ENGINEERS ORGANIZATION

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Treasurer: Jawad Ibrahim, and **Secretary:** Luis Durani

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THE SOCIETY OF AFGHAN ENGINEERS

P. O. Box 11520

BURKE, Virginia 22009-1520

Telephone: 909-868-4212

Email: info@afghanengineers.org

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Home: _____ Office: _____

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The active members of the Society of Afghan Engineers (SAE): Please mark (x) the appropriate box related to your address and other contact information.

- ☐ Yes, the above is a change in address or contact information.
☐ No, the above address is the same as it is listed on the SAE website

The SAE is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization.

Amount of Annual 2012 Membership: \$60.00

Donation: : -----

Total: -----

Please send your check or money order payable to the Society of Afghan Engineers.

Suggestion and comments: _____