

## SAVE THE DATE!

The Society Annual Convention this year (September 28, 2016, through October 1, 2016) will be in Portland, Oregon. Registration is currently open. Visit [www.asceconvention.org](http://www.asceconvention.org) for additional information.

Charleston Branch meeting to take place on Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup> (6:00 pm) at the Advanced Technology Center at the WV Regional Technology Park (1201 Science Park Drive, South Charleston). RSVP to [Melissa Thompson](#).

WVUIT's Annual Fall Technical Conference will be on Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup> on WVUIT's Montgomery campus (this will be the last WVUIT Annual Fall Tech. Conf. on the Montgomery campus).

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### ***Don't forget to check out:***

WV Section ASCE [Website!](#)

**NEW** WV Section ASCE Blog!  
(<http://wvasce.blogspot.com/>)

## **WV Section Volunteers Lend Helping Hand to Flood Victims**

*Ben Walpole (Associate Editor, ASCE News) – Reprinted with Permission*



*Marshall student Austin Page, S.M.ASCE, and Marshall professor Andrew Nichols, Ph.D., P.E., M.ASCE, don special suits to clean up mud and debris left over from the June floods in West Virginia.*

The rain started Thursday morning and didn't stop until Friday.

Jeremy Brown tracked the storm with a fishing app on his phone.

"I was watching the flood level," Brown said. "And it kept rising and rising and rising and rising..."

The flash floods that poured through West Virginia June 23-26 washed away trucks, trailers, homes, and livelihoods. The water level of the Elk River, just northwest of Charleston, reached a record high. All told, the storm claimed 23 lives.

"It was pretty crazy," said Brown, who saw the three-bedroom house he and his father built together on the banks of the Elk as a fishing camp completely uprooted. "The town closest to our camps there, Clendenin – driving

through there, it literally looked like a war zone. Houses completely devastated, roads washed out."

Members of the ASCE West Virginia Section felt compelled to help.

"I made some phone calls and identified us as an engineering group that could assist in some form or fashion in the recovery process from a technical standpoint," said Jeff Huffman, P.E., M.ASCE, a faculty member at Marshall University and West Virginia Section president.

Huffman, along with fellow Marshall professors Greg Michaelson, Ph.D., A.M.ASCE (Section secretary), and Andrew Nichols, Ph.D., P.E., M.ASCE (Huntington Branch president), took a group of 12 volunteers out to the flood-ravaged area near the Elk River in Clay County to help locals still in recovery mode three weeks after the storm had passed. Just getting to the sites proved challenging, with many of the roads still significantly damaged.

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## WV Section Volunteers Lend Helping Hand to Flood Victims (cont'd)

"We drove on a road that was wiped out in numerous places," Huffman said. "The National Guard had reconstructed it by just dumping rocksoil fill in the missing sections, and compacting it to gain access to the remote areas."

They arrived at the site of Bob and Jeremy Brown's former fishing camp, and the scene was even more shocking. The house was separated from its foundation. Meanwhile, the flood had somehow taken the stand-alone garage from one side of the house and deposited it intact on the other side of the property, 100 yards downstream.



*Members of the ASCE West Virginia Section helped lead a group of volunteers to assist in flood recovery work.*

"I think we were all taken aback when we started to take stock of what the storm had done," Michaelson said.

The group led by ASCE volunteers went to Clay County 23 days after the storm, so by then the Elk River had returned to its normal levels. The sun was shining. People were out fishing.

Nichols couldn't help noticing the striking contrast between this idyllic scene and the remnants of the flood's havoc still littering the river banks.

"It's just such a beautiful river, so serene and peaceful," said Nichols, who volunteered along

with his father and his son. "To stand there and look at how that beautiful body of water could turn around and cause so much destruction was pretty surreal."

In all, the group assisted with recovery at five different properties, clearing mud and debris, removing a deck awning, disassembling a garage for reconstruction, along with assessing various sites for the feasibility of home salvage and creek-bank stability.

"It was really nice to see us working together," Michaelson said. "It was like we were all a well-oiled machine. It was hard work, but in a way it was really enjoyable because we felt like we were helping out and making a difference."

Among the volunteers, Emily Gould is a senior civil engineering student at the University of Alabama, where she is vice president of operations for the ASCE Student Chapter. She grew up in Charleston, WV, and was home this summer for an internship. She volunteered at the Elkview Baptist Church flood relief distribution center and was excited to work with the ASCE group.

"Being an ASCE member and a West Virginia resident, you pitch in where you can," said Gould, S.M.ASCE. "You see a lot of people banding together to help their neighbors, so, for me, it's been an inspirational story of people coming back from a tragic event."

Bob and Jeremy Brown are looking toward the future even as they clean up their wrecked house. Jeremy said they've got their eyes on a site upstream, a high point perfect for a rebuilt fishing camp.

In the meantime, he appreciates the ASCE help.

"They just showed up, no questions asked and jumped in and took off working," Brown said. "People just showing up, not knowing a soul and just starting to work like that? It's humbling. It's hard to put into words, to be honest with you."

## Current WV Section ASCE Officers (2015-2016)

Jeffrey T. Huffman, P.E. F.ASCE  
President ([jeff.huffman@marshall.edu](mailto:jeff.huffman@marshall.edu))

Melissa Thompson, P.E. M.ASCE  
Vice President ([melissa.thompson@bridgevalley.edu](mailto:melissa.thompson@bridgevalley.edu))

Gregory K. Michaelson, Ph.D. AM.ASCE  
Secretary ([michaelson@marshall.edu](mailto:michaelson@marshall.edu))

Jim Ashworth, P.E. M.ASCE  
Treasurer ([jim.ashworth@frontier.com](mailto:jim.ashworth@frontier.com))

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## President's Corner

*Jeffrey T. Huffman, P.E. F.ASCE (2015-2016 President, WV Section ASCE)*



Over the last two years, the WV Section has had many different events, from Annual Meetings to Pumpkin Drops. Additionally, our student chapters have been active and fruitful in all their numerous activities. To list all these Section and Student Chapter activities would consume the entire newsletter. But, I will briefly mention two very recent endeavors.

To improve retention of student chapter members at the professional level, we have recently submitted four STAY (Student Transition ActivitY) Grants to the Student Transition Sub-Committee of ASCE. If awarded, two of these grants will sponsor a Young Professionals Series on finance, insurance, home mortgages, and membership benefits. The other two grants will sponsor Graduation Banquets for ASCE student chapter members across the state.

Our Section recently sponsored two flood relief volunteer days to help the residences of Clay County impacted by the June 23<sup>rd</sup> storm. Between the two days (July 16<sup>th</sup> and August 20<sup>th</sup>) our members provided approximately 700 hours of service. We had five members attend both days!! See the newsletter cover story written by Ben Walpole for additional details on the July 16<sup>th</sup> effort.

It has been a privilege to serve as your President for the past two years. I could not have led this organization without the help of many within our organization, and I thank everyone who was there when they were needed.

Please do everything you can to support the incoming officers. I wish the new officers the best of luck in the coming year.

## Governor's Corner

*Carol Stevens, P.E. F.ASCE (ASCE Region 4 Governor, WV)*

As we have just made it through summer, what a summer it was. From the heat, that we are still experiencing, along with a lack of rain lately, to the devastating floods of June 23<sup>rd</sup>, many of our members have been busy volunteering and/or donating time or supplies to those who were so unfortunately affected. Keep up the efforts, we have so many good people involved in our organization! Thank you to everyone.

As all of you have recently received your membership renewal invoices have found out, yes, there is an increase of \$15 in the dues for the upcoming year. Times are tight at the Society (as they are everywhere else for that matter). The ASCE Board of Direction is committed to cutting spending where member value can be maintained and enhanced. Funds have been taken from the Society's reserve for the past 4-5 years to cover annual operating expenses which, as many of you business-minded engineers know, is not sustainable. Under the increased dues and spending reduction scenarios, it is the hope to eliminate the need to use reserve funds for this purpose and strengthen ASCE for the future.

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## Governor's Corner (cont'd)

Options to reduce spending included taking another look at the governance of the Society. This included looking at re-drawing the region boundaries. In all proposals, Region 4 would be split up and absorbed by a variety of other regions. As Region 4 Governors, we were ALL adverse to any of these options and were very vocal about it. Much of the history of the Society revolves around the current regions and the former districts. Under all of the proposals, even our old district relationships were to be torn apart. Fortunately, after a heated debate, all of the recommendations or proposals were rejected, leaving our Region 4 boundaries as is. As another note, Region 4 forwarded a resolution that would align the student conference boundaries with the region boundaries (even though this was the result of a very close vote at the last Region 4 meeting). That resolution did not receive any traction.

Work continues on ASCE's giant-screen movie Dream Big: Engineering Wonders of the World with a release slated for February 2017. We are trying to see if the Clay Center will be able to show the movie which has been filmed for IMAX theaters. We hope to have more information soon.

### **Meet the Candidates (2016-2017 Officers)**

#### **Melissa Thompson, P.E. M.ASCE (Candidate for President)**

Melissa Thompson, P.E. is an Associate Professor and the Outreach Coordinator at BridgeValley Community and Technical College. She holds a B.S. in Civil Engineering from WVUIT and an M.S. in Engineering from Marshall. Melissa is involved in many community and professional organizations and is currently the Vice-President of the West Virginia Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers. Melissa lives in Charleston, WV with her husband and two daughters

#### **Brandon Huffman AM.ASCE (Candidate for Vice President)**

Brandon Huffman works at GAI Consultants. He is a graduate of BSC with a B.S. in Natural Science and a B.S. in Civil Engineering Technology. He has been in many roles of ASCE serving as Treasurer for the YMF, President of Northern Branch, and Practitioner Advisor at BSC and FSU

#### **Gregory Michaelson, Ph.D. AM.ASCE (Candidate for Secretary)**

Gregory Michaelson is a faculty in the Weisberg Division of Engineering at Marshall University. He completed his Ph.D. in Civil Engineering at WVU in 2014, emphasizing in structural engineering and highway bridge design. Dr. Michaelson has also been appointed as the primary faculty advisor of the SAME-ASCE Student Chapter at Marshall for the 2016-2017 academic year.

## Update from the Fairmont State University ASCE Student Chapter

Tabitha Lafferre (Faculty Advisor, FSU ASCE Student Chapter)



Fairmont State University's Student Chapter of ASCE is making waves and working towards breaking new records! The Chapter was awarded the 2016 ASCE Distinguished Chapter Award for Region 4 by the ASCE Committee on Student Members. Also, based on the 2015 annual report, the Chapter was a Robert Ridgway Award Finalist. This distinction was earned by only five out of 339 ASCE Student Chapters.

In June, the Chapter's concrete canoe team traveled to Tyler, Texas, and competed in the 2016 National Concrete Canoe Competition. This year, the team placed 12<sup>th</sup> in the nation overall, tying its previous best ranking, and broke a record in the women's sprints with a ninth place finish and placed in the men's endurance race for the first time in Fairmont State history. The team is encroaching on setting the longest overall consecutive national appearance record ever held by a team at the NCCC, which is currently set at 15.

Beginning the 2016-2017 academic year, the Chapter has hit the ground running. The Chapter is heavily focusing on recruiting as well as service projects. Recently, the Chapter partnered with the United Way of Harrison County and assisted with a regatta cardboard boat race. The chapter has also held a welcome picnic as well as a day-long paddling trip down the Youghiogheny River as a team-building exercise and to welcome new members.

At the same time, the concrete canoe team is holding weekly paddling practices. Due to NCCC rule changes, the team is also overhauling the concrete matrix and gearing up to pour the canoe in the fall semester for the first time in Fairmont State history.

The Chapter's 14th Annual Summer Technical conference, will be held on Thursday June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. This conference will be offering six (6) PDH's, at the discretion of the WV State Board for Registered Professional Engineers. Additional details will be available soon. RSVP's may be sent to [tabitha.lafferre@fairmontstate.edu](mailto:tabitha.lafferre@fairmontstate.edu).



2016 Concrete Canoe Team at the NCCC. Paddling for a cure in honor of ASCE Mentor, Tia Como

Pictured from left to right:

Back – Brandon Howdershelt, Jimmy Pumphrey, Anthoney Urgo, Tabitha Lafferre (Advisor), Rosetta Kolar (Advisor), Jeffrey Hartley, Jonathan Decker, Ben Costello  
Front: Katie Kelly (captain), Hunter Beall, Ian Chrobak, Kalee Murphey, (captain), Courtney Ridenour (captain), Ashley Kiser, Sammy Jesmer  
Not pictured: Quentin Knight