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President's Message

Don't Let A New Project Manager Fail On A Complex Project Because You Withhold Support.

I thought we would print my last President's Message in the May Newsletter. I found out at our May Meeting I was wrong. Our chapter members must suffer through one more! This is it!

I wracked my brain for a while thinking about a worthy topic for this message. After chewing on it for a couple of days, I decided to share lessons from a personal experience I had. The experience came when I was a new project manager and a brand new licensed surveyor. The company I worked for at the time was not in the land development business. Despite this, it decided to take on a massive land subdivision project for a partnership that included a long-time client. Let me tell you:

- 1) A little bit about the project.
- 2) Changes that occurred while I was working on the project.
- 3) My failures on the project.
- 4) How my management team failed to support my role as a project manager.
- 5) The lessons we can learn from this experience.

The Project

The land subdivision project involved subdividing 1,600 acres of vineyards. The vineyards occupied the rolling foothills east of Stockton. The subdivision would create 42 large ranchette lots. Our scope-of-services for the project included the following:

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Calendar of Events

Meetings are at the Hilton Sacramento Arden West unless otherwise noted.

Please note price increase:

Member Cost: \$40 - Non-Member \$55

Saturday July 21, 2018

23rd Annual Summer Social

La Provence Restaurant & Terrace
(See Attached Flyer)

Registration Deadline: July 1st

[Register Here](#)

Monday, July 23rd 2018

Sierra Chapter EEA Applications Due

Submit to:

dlocicero@acec-ca-sierra.org

(No later than 5:00 P.M on 7/23/2018)

July 25th – 27th

ACEC CA Leadership Training and Board Meeting, San Diego

Friday, August 10th

Sierra Chapter EEA Awards Notifications

Wednesday, September 19, 2018

The first chapter meeting of the 2018/2019 term will also be the Fourth Annual EEA Awards Ceremony

Hilton Sacramento—Arden West

Guest Speaker TBA

(Table Sponsorships will be available)



Landon Blake

Sierra Chapter President
2017-2018

Presidents Message Continued.

Continued from page 1

- 1) Creating a record-of-survey for the parent parcel boundary.
- 2) Creating and obtaining approval for a final parcel map for the subdivision.
- 3) Setting monuments at the corners of the new parcels.
- 4) Working with the partnerships land attorney on various issues related to the approval of the parcel map.

What type of challenges did this project present to me?
There were several:

- 1) I wasn't a land development surveyor. That wasn't the type of work my company did. I wasn't familiar with the process.
- 2) The County had never approved a large lot subdivision of this scale. County staff were unsure about how the map should look or how the entitlement process would work.
- 3) The boundary survey to resolve the parent parcel was very complex. The vesting deed for the property contained several unique parcels. Surveyors hadn't previously mapped the parcels.
- 4) The boundary survey involved researching and reviewing a giant pile of survey maps and deeds. It also required the survey of well over a hundred individual property corners.

My Failures On The Project

How did I fail on this project? Four of my failures stand out in hindsight:

- 1) I didn't have a good system for organizing research and field surveys for a project this complex. This resulted in the omission of an important survey map from our original research. It also resulted in duplicated field work.
- 2) After I discovered the omitted survey map, the boundary resolution changed. This required the removal and resetting of property corner monuments in the field.
- 3) My record-of-survey map for the parent parcel boundary was way too complicated. My effort to prepare a good map and show all the related data resulted in a work product that was hard to read. It also took too long to draw and obscured the most important information.

4) I failed to ask for more help and more time from my management team. I didn't recognize that I was being overwhelmed. I didn't want to admit my management team was asking me to perform above my skill set.

The Failures Of My Management Team

How did my management team fail to support my role as a new project manager? Remember, I'd never tackled a project of this type or scale. I didn't have my license when the project started. (I had it when we completed the project.) I believe my management team failed me in four important ways:

- 1) The management team accepted a project for an unreasonable fee. Instead of acknowledging this (and taking that the project wouldn't be profitable), they kept pressuring me to work faster. I remember sleeping for a few hours under my desk as we wrapped up a significant phase of the project. I had worked almost 20 hours the previous day. Why was this necessary? My management team didn't help me work more efficiently. They didn't give me more resources. They didn't identify areas where I was being inefficient. Instead, they imposed an arbitrary deadline to motivate completion of my tasks. My response was the same response I'd given the whole project. I poured in more of my uncompensated hours.
- 2) The management team didn't teach me to manage complexity. No one showed me a system to manage the research of field work. Our company had never managed a land development project of this size in its 80-year history. Recognizing that, they should've provided me with help from more experienced project managers. They didn't.
- 3) The resolution of the parent parcel boundary was one of the most challenging surveys I've done to date. My management team failed to understand these challenges. They also didn't offer different alternatives to the location of difficult property corners.
- 4) The management team assigned an inexperienced project manager to a complex project on which our company lacked the required experience. This decision created a no-win situation for me, our client, and our company's profitability.

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Recap—Legislative Visit Day: May 8, 2018

By Marco Palilla, Chapter Director



On May 8, 2018, the Sierra Chapter joined over 100 members from around the state for our 2018 Legislative Visit Day. This is our annual occasion to meet with our legislators and their staff to explain our views on various issues that impact our industry. In my opinion, this is one of the most important activities for ACEC since it provides direct access to the people that have such impact on our businesses. It is also a great opportunity to remind legislators how important the engineering and surveying industry is to the daily lives of every Californian. This year's event was the best one yet!



Sierra Chapter members who attended Legislative Visit Day included (left to right) Marco Palilla, Bob Lokteff, Mel Sears, Dana Remington, Kathy Wickam, Debanik Chaudhuri, Chad Coleman, Diane Ogden, Harvey Oslick, Kevin Gustorf, Tom Sells, Mark Rayback and Joy Denny.

The day kicked off at The Citizens Hotel with breakfast and then a visit by Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins (D—San Diego). She talked about infrastructure and the recall of Josh Newman for supporting Senate Bill 1 (Transportation Funding). She commented that his recall is a bad idea on many levels and could have serious impacts on the future of

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Recap—Legislative Visit Day: May 8, 2018 Continued

Continued from page 3

the gas tax. We then walked over to the Capitol for our morning meetings with Assembly members (or their staff) and Senate members (or their staff).



Sierra Chapter members Kathy Wickam, Bob Lokteff, Diane Ogden and Kevin Gustorf getting cozy with Governor Brown's grizzly bear on Legislative Visit Day.

During lunch back at the Citizens Hotel we heard from Governor Jerry Brown and his view point on the current gas tax (if we don't stop its repeal, it will take decades to recover). Afternoon meetings continued through 5:00 PM with legislators (or their staff). After the legislative meetings, everyone met up at Brasserie Capitale for a friendly reception that included legislators. Thanks again to the Sierra Chapter members who made this another awesome event!



Sierra Chapter members Harvey Oslick, Marco Palilla and Tom Sells educating Assemblymember Kevin Kiley (R – District 6) on the importance of well-funded and maintained infrastructure.

President's Message Continued

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What Are The Lessons

What have I things has this project taught me personally?

I've had another decade or two in the land surveying business since I completed this project. In that time, I've dealt with other complex projects and difficult boundary resolutions. I've gotten more organized and my maps have gotten simpler. When my company accepts projects for unreasonable fees, I speak up in the beginning to set realistic expectations. These include realistic expectations for profitability and my level of effort.

What lessons does this story offer management teams at other surveying companies? Let's take away the three most important lessons:

- 1) Assign your new project managers a mentor on complex projects. Don't set them up to fail. Make sure the mentor has the correct type of experience. Make sure the mentor stays involved in the project. The mentor doesn't need to micromanage. Let the new project manager make decisions and execute, but have the mentor available to offer guidance.
- 2) Teach your new project managers important skills for

managing complex projects. The skills includes setting up systems to track the progress of work and to manage tasks like research and field surveys.

3) Match the skills of your new project managers to the projects you assign them. By allowing them to start with smaller and simpler projects, you build their confidence. You also give them a chance to enjoy the success of a well-executed project. If you've got a new project manager sleeping under this desk to meet a deadline you've imposed, you've got a huge problem. That problem isn't the guy missing out on sleep at home; it's you. Think about that while you are drooling on your pillow.

Conclusion

I'm glad I was able to work on the project in this story. It taught me valuable lessons. It provided me with excellent experience as a land development surveyor. It also helped me realize, after 12 years, that my company at the time was a poor fit for my values. Now that I've shared this story, I hope my pain on the project will also help you and your management team.

Landon Blake
2017/2018 Sierra Chapter President

May 2018—Meeting Recap. Career Advice For Young Professionals Panel

By Landon Blake, President

Our May Meeting featured a new event we called the Panel on Career Advice For Young Professionals. As part of the event, our chapter held a group discussion in which the panelists shared some of their most important career advice and lessons learned with our audience. The panelists took turns answering these questions:

- 1) What is the most important career advice you would give a young engineer or land surveyor?
- 2) What is the biggest challenge you faced in your career as an engineer or land surveyor, and what did you learn from it?
- 3) What skills or characteristics are the most important for a

young engineer or land surveyor to possess in today's world?

Our panel had a great mix of members representing the public sector and the private sector, men and women, business owners and employees. Our panelists were Chad Coleman (of Coleman Engineering), Marco Palilla (of HDR), Elba Mijango (from the City of Manteca), and Aundrea Tirapelle (of Guida). Cameron Hagans (of Ghirardelli and Associates) moderated the panel.

The panelists offered great advice to the young professionals that were invited to the meeting by our regular chapter members.

4th Annual Sierra Chapter Engineering Excellence Awards

By Kathy Wickam, Vice President

The Sierra Chapter Board is excited to announce our Fourth Annual Engineering Excellence Awards Program. This program is not to be confused with the statewide competition, but instead a Sierra chapter event. We aim to promote the great work that our member firms are doing in our region. Our goal is to recognize deserving accomplishments and highlight these successes to clients and other member firms. Projects must in-

clude a member firm to have been completed between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018. Nomination forms are available on the Chapter website (www.acec-ca-sierra.org) with applications due July 23rd. Winners will be announced August 10th and will be awarded at our Annual EEA Awards Dinner September 19th. This is a great way to showcase the great work your firm has done this past year, so submit your projects!

Project Nominations

Sierra Chapter Firms are invited to submit projects to be featured at our Chapter 2017/18 Engineering Excellence event, Wednesday evening, **September 19, 2018** at the Hilton Hotel, Sacramento. All member firms are encouraged to submit nominations. All entries will be displayed at the Hilton and projects best meeting selection criteria for excellence (and potentially other special awards at the discretion of the selection committee) will be recognized at the event. Special recognition will also be given for pro bono work and for projects with significant contributions by multiple Sierra Chapter member firms.

Please submit the requested information in a separate Microsoft Word or PDF file by e-mail to Debbie LoCicero <dlocicero@acec-ca-sierra.org> as a Word or .pdf file no later than **Monday, July 23rd at 5 p.m.** Projects must have been completed between July 1, 2017 and July 1, 2018 and must be submitted by a member firm. Projects may be for any phase or phases of work – from study through construction management. Display material (graphics for slideshow) must be provided to the committee no later than **September 7, 2018**.

Project Information:

Member Firm

Project Title

Client

Other Firms Participating

Completion Date

Contact Name, Phone & E-mail

Your Organization's Role in the Project

Role of Other Organizations in the Project

Award Category:

Please indicate which of the following award categories your project is applying for. (A project may apply for multiple categories if applicable. Projects will automatically be considered for the Project of the Year Award.)

- Best Civil Engineering Project
- Best Land Surveying Project
- Best Pro-Bono Project
- Best Innovative Community Design Project
- Most Beautiful Design Project

4th Annual Sierra Chapter Engineering Excellence Awards Cont.

By Kathy Wickam, Vice President

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Evaluation Criteria:

Please complete responses to the following evaluation criteria:

- Describe the value your project provided to the community (social/economic/environmental/beauty).
- Describe the challenges your project overcame.
- Describe how your project satisfied the client, community, and project stakeholders.
 - a) How was the client engaged during the planning, design, construction process?
 - b) Did the design meet or exceed the original design concepts and constraints?
 - c) Was the project design delivered on schedule and on budget?
 - d) How did the project provide a cost-effective solution?
 - e) How did the project provide innovative solutions to the client problem/challenge?
 - f) How did the project help the client meet its short-term and long-term goals?
- Volunteer effort or charitable contributions.
 - a) Did your organization donate team member time, funds, or equipment for the project? Describe

23rd Annual Summer Social—Saturday July 21 -La Provence Restaurant & Terrace

Our annual summer social will be held on July 21st at the La Provence Restaurant in Roseville. Come join us for the annual passing of the gavel to the new Board. We will start the evening with drinks and appetizers at 5:30 p.m. and dinner at 6:00 p.m. **Registration deadline is**

less than 2 weeks away, July 1st. R.S.V.P. today!

Hope to see you all there!

[Register Here](#)

Please see the attached flyer for additional information.

ACEC-CA Sierra Chapter Member Profile



ABOUT SIEGFRIED

Siegfried is a multidisciplinary design firm specializing in civil and structural engineering, landscape architecture, surveying, planning, and athletic facility design. Located Stockton, Sacramento, Modesto, and San Jose, we provide compelling and comprehensive design solutions for both public and private clients throughout Central and Northern California. Siegfried is a client-focused firm that was founded in 1955 and has gained a reputation as one of the area’s leading professional, multidisciplinary services firm. Our innovative approach combined with hands-on-management, regulatory guidance, and technical expertise continues to shape the success of communities and businesses in each of our practice areas and beyond.



Stockton
3244 Brookside Rd., #100
Stockton, CA 95219
t: 209.943.2021
Stockton, CA 95219

San Jose
111 N. Market St., #300
San Jose, CA 95113
t: 408.754.2021
San Jose, CA 95113

Sacramento
109 Scripps Drive
Sacramento, CA 95825
t: 916.520.2777
Sacramento, CA 95825

Modesto
100 Sycamore Ave., #100
Modesto, CA 95354
t: 209.762.3580
Modesto, CA 95354

2017-18 Board of Directors

Officers

Landon Blake, *President*

(Guida Surveying)
209.298.7521
lblake@guidasurveying.com

Kathy Wickam, *Vice President*

(Dokken Engineering)
916.858.0642
kwickam@dokkenengineering.com

**Debanik Chaudhuri, *Secretary/
Treasurer***

(Shannon & Wilson)
916.438.2300
dxc@shanwil.com

Directors

Chad Coleman

(Coleman Engineering)
916.791.1188
chad@coleman-eng.com

Kevin Gustorf

(Wood Rodgers, Inc.)
916.341.7760
Kgustorf@WoodRodgers.com

Marco Palilla

(HDR Engineering, Inc.)
916.817.4878
Marco.Palilla@hdrinc.com

Tom Sell

(SAGE Engineers, Inc.)
916.677.4775
tsell@sageengineers.com

Jerry Jones

(Morton & Pitalo)
916.984.7621
jjones@mpengr.com

Marshall Moore

(WSP USA)
Marshall.Moore@wsp.com
916.567.2582

State Directors

Landon Blake (2021)

(Guida Surveying)
209-298-7521
lblake@guidasurveying.com

Dana Remington (2020)

(Andregg Geomatics)
530.885.7072
dremington@andregg.com

Harvey Oslick (2019)

(Wood Rodgers, Inc.)
916.326.5297
hoslick@WoodRodgers.com

Tom Holdrege (2018)

(Holdrege & Kull)
530.478.1305
tholdrege@HandK.net

GET NOTICED IN THE SIERRA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER!

Would you like to see YOUR FIRM listed in this Newsletter?

ACEC-CA/Sierra Chapter firms in good standing are invited to submit a company profile for inclusion in this newsletter. **Firms that have not been featured in the last two years are invited to participate again.**

Contact Kathy Wickam, Vice President.

Point of Contact:

Kathy Wickam
(Dokken Engineering)
916-858-0462
kwickam@dokkenengineering.com

ACEC

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES
California

Debbie LoCicero
**Recording Secretary
Newsletter Editor**
dlocicero@acec-ca-sierra.org

Chris von Collenberg
Webmaster
cvc@wavecable.com

ACEC California Sierra Chapter

Summer Social—2018

You and a guest are cordially invited to attend ACEC-CA
Sierra Chapter's 23rd Annual Summer Social Event

A tradition in the Sierra Chapter, this event signals the end of the current term and welcomes the incoming Board with the official "passing of the gavel".

Date: Saturday, July 21, 2018

When: 5:30-6:00: Appetizers
6:00-8:30: Dinner

Where: La Provence Restaurant & Terrace
110 Diamond Creek Place
Roseville, CA 95747
916-789-2002



- Entrée Choices:**
1. Bistro Filet: Grilled marinated steak, with roasted garlic mashed potatoes and demi-glace with seasonal vegetables..
 2. Almond Crusted Salmon: Sun dried tomato and bacon pearl pasta, spinach, sherry cream.
 3. Chicken Provencal: Grilled marinated chicken breast with rosemary roasted red potatoes and a tomato, herb, caper sauce with seasonal vegetables.
 4. Vegetarian or Vegan.

Dessert: Dessert will be served.

RSVP: <https://summersocialeventsaturdayjuly21-2018.eventbrite.com>

Dress: Casual

Cost: \$65.00 per person