

January 19, 2011

Happy New Year

By **Robert B. Lokteff, G.E.**

Blackburn Consulting

CalGeo Chair of Technician Affairs and Safety



Happy New Year!

As you think about your New Year's resolutions for 2011, don't forget about proactive loss prevention education. As Chair of CalGeo's Technical Affairs and Safety Committee, I have had the opportunity to be part of several CalGeo Loss Prevention Seminars (LPSs) as a speaker and organizer,

and have always come away with good information and ideas that help keep our company out of trouble. Many attendees (field technicians and staff engineers alike) have told me that CalGeo's LPSs have provided valuable information that they have put into practice.

Attendees of CalGeo's LPSs routinely gain loss prevention education related to safety, field report documentation, project communication, litigation and other topics from speakers with hands-on experience in geotechnical engineering. This year's LPS topics deal with compaction testing of a non-typical soil, reinforced-earth wall construction, drilled shaft safety, lessons learned to reduce exposure to litigation and handling of contaminated soil and ground-water during construction. I urge you to take advantage of CalGeo's very affordable day-long LPSs this year in southern or northern California. Details are available at the [CalGeo website](#).

Here's to a loss-free 2011.

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BPELS Is Now the Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists

Effective January 1, 2011, the BPELS Board has a new name: it is now the Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists. The Board also has been increased by two members: one public and one geologist for a total of 15 members. (There currently are three vacant public member seats.)

As one of his last official acts, on January 2, 2011, Governor Schwarzenegger appointed Erik Zinn, P.G., C.E.G, to the Geologist position on the Board. Erik is the principal geologist at Zinn Geology, in Soquel (Santa Cruz County).

CalGeo member Jim Foley was the Board's Geotechnical Engineer member. His term has expired. The

revamped Board still has a Civil Engineer member (David Luzuriga, C.E.) but no longer has a Geotechnical Engineer. Erik will be the most direct link between the Board and the Geotechnical Engineering profession.

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GETAC Committee Addresses Upcoming Changes for Geologists and Geophysicists

By James W. Foley, P.E., S.E., G.E.

BPELSG Geologist and Geophysicist Technical Advisory Committee (GETAC) met on Wednesday, December 15, 2010. Stephen Testa, Executive Officer of the State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB) gave an excellent presentation on the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Zoning Act including its history and current issues facing the SMBG. Allowable development in fault zones is among the more controversial.

With the Boards merger, the examination process for Geologists and Geophysicists has undergone some changes that require greater participation by licensees to produce "legally defensible" exams. BPELSG is requesting Geologists and Geophysicists increase their participation in order to keep the examination process viable. Exams may be cancelled if adequate participation was not realized.

The committee also is reviewing the Rules and Regulations of the Geologist and Geophysicist Act to insure that the regulations are contemporary, relevant, and responsive. Included in this effort is a review of the definitions of geology and geophysics.

It appears that the GETAC is going to be a very busy committee in the next few years.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

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CalGeo's 40th Annual Conference

Register Now and Save!

By Larry Taylor,

Taylor Group, Inc.

CalGeo Conference Chairman



Don't miss CalGeo's 40th annual conference, April 14-16 at The Claremont Hotel in Berkeley. The conference will encompass a broad range of business, legislative and technical topics, highlighted by a keynote session presented by Professor Les Youd. Our golf tournament will be on Thursday, April 14. The conference will end with a 40th anniversary 70's party that you won't want to miss.

Regular conference registration ends March 21. A substantial discount is offered for Early Bird registration until February 21. In addition, this year CalGeo is offering a 10 percent discount on your firm's dues if you send two or more fully registered attendees.

We have a great room rate of \$189 per night at the Claremont.

[CLICK HERE](#) to visit our website for full conference information. Brochures have been mailed to member firms... so check your mail and visit the web site. [CLICK HERE](#) to read more.

Conference OPA Entries

CalGeo Requests Submittals of Outstanding Projects

By John Hoobs, C.E.G.

Principal, Geocon Incorporated

CalGeo will again be recognizing member firms for their outstanding geotechnical projects at our next annual conference in April. Entries will be judged on innovation, difficulty of the investigation, quality of report, success of interaction between the design team, and social impact of the project. Entries will be divided into three categories based on the total fees billed for the project. Winners of each category will be awarded an engraved trophy and given the opportunity to present their project at the annual conference. Past winners have included:

2009-2010 Large Project Award Winner:

BSK Associates

Minarets High School, O'Neals, CA

2009-2010 Medium Project Award Winner:

ENGEO

Trestle Glen, Colma, CA



Greg Silver with Outstanding Project Award Winner Ben Serna of ENGEO, La Jolla 2010

Please consider spotlighting your company's technical achievements by submitting a project by January 28. The application for submittal can be downloaded at our website www.calgeo.org/programs/awards.php.

CalGeo Member Firm to Present at NACGEA Workshop

Gary Gilbert from CalGeo member firm Diaz Yourman & Associates will present a paper at the North American Chinese Geotechnical Engineers Association - NACGEA, 7th Geotechnical Workshop on January 28 at Leighton Consulting in Irvine. The presentation will discuss geotechnical aspects of the Port of Long Beach's Security Command and Control Center, and steps the firm took to address challenging rock dikes and liquefiable soils.

The project site was located adjacent to an existing stepped perimeter rock dike and contained two previously placed but now buried rock dikes. The perimeter and buried rock dikes were underlain and surrounded by soft and loose potentially liquefiable soils. The high seismic setting of the Port, combined with the stepped perimeter rock dike, and the potentially liquefiable soils could lead to several feet of lateral displacement due to design earthquake loadings. To provide an earthquake resistance design for the facility, a unique driven pile foundation was selected and installed.



Port of Long Beach Security
Command and Control Center

[CLICK HERE](#) to find out more about the NACGEA workshop.

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Generous Donations Establish R.T. Frankian Memorial Award for Student Outreach

CalGeo is very pleased to announce that R.T. Frankian & Associates, Inc. has presented the CalGeo student outreach program with a memorial award of \$2565.00, in honor of the late R.T. Frankian. This will be the first award of an ongoing memorial fund in his name, which will be used to encourage and assist students in the field of geotechnical engineering. Contributions to the fund were made by friends, family, and colleagues in recognition of Frankian's outstanding career, his passion for geotechnical engineering, and his interest in promoting our profession. We thank the following individual contributors:

Alan & Jacquelyn Aufhammer
Ted Clark
Fred & Karen Eldridge
ENGE0 Inc.
Gwen Geiger
Arthur & Ruby Gillman
Ronald Horn
Suzanne Klemer
William & Jeanette Larson

James & Gail Lloyd
R.M. & V.E. Parrish
Sandra & Brian Pitcher
Jim Schad
Syed & Nighat Shere
Bethene & John Simmons
Terry & Nancy Tibbetts
Al Brooks Tickets
Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Tidik

We are thankful for this generous donation, and are confident that it will help develop the next generation of geotechnical engineers. Many thanks to R.T. Frankian & Associates, Inc!

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Counsel's Corner

How Much Should You Care? Defining the Standard of Care for Engineers and Geologists in California

By Niv V. Davidovich, Esq

Manning & Marder, Kass, Ellrod, Ramirez, LLP

As engineers (and geologists), you have professional duties. However, the standard of care for those duties is not clear cut. Many engineers believe that just being "code compliant" is enough. But unfortunately, that's not always the case.

A professional engineer has a "duty to act as a reasonable engineer in the same locale would act in a similar

situation." But how does the court know how a reasonable engineer would act? It relies primarily on expert opinion. The problem is that for every expert who will say the code definitively determines an engineer's standard of care, there are ten who will say that the code is but a starting point.

So how do you protect yourself against crazy expert testimony? Contract language. First, you have to establish the standard you're going to be working under. Next, in order to make your standard enforceable, you'll have to apply a limitation of liability clause.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read more.

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You Need To Know

A Written Contract Is Required By BPELSG

By Mike Laney, G.E.

Earth Systems, Inc.

This is the first article in a series on understanding some of the pitfalls that licensed engineers may fall into in the State of California. Section 6749 of the Professional Engineers Act (PEA) requires that professional engineers use a written contract when providing professional engineering services to a client. This regulation has been in effect since January 1, 2001. It is required that the engineer include his or her name, address and license number somewhere in this contract. Though it is unlikely that an engineer will be reported to the board for not following this regulation, if the engineer is reported for something else unrelated and does not have a contract, or if the contract does not include this information, he or she can be found in violation of the PEA. Please take some time to review this section, and the other regulations by [CLICKING HERE](#).

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Attention All Readers!

e.Geo Articles Wanted



e.Geo WANTS YOU

We want CalGeo member firms to submit short articles for the monthly e.Geo about your interesting or innovative projects, or happenings in your geotechnical consulting community. Let our profession know what you are doing. The e.Geo article should be short (less than 150 words), but we can link it to a longer article. The article should have an "interest catching" photograph - something that would make other geotechnical professionals want to read more. We know you have busy schedules and lives, so we have developed Standards to help e.Geo authors. [CLICK HERE](#) to review the e.Geo standards.

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CalGeo's Upcoming Board Meeting

CalGeo's Board meeting will be held Thursday, January 20th in San Diego from 9am - 5pm. [CLICK HERE](#) for the agenda.

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Safety First

The 4 Most Common Workplace Injuries

Courtesy of the California State Compensation Insurance Fund

1: **Physical overload:** Injuries from poor material handling such as improper lifting techniques, straining, overreaching, bending, or twisting. Commonly affect the back, shoulders, and arms.

2: **Falls:** Injuries caused by unsafe actions or unsafe conditions. Examples: Slipping on the floor or ground and falling from ladders or roofs.

3: **Impact incidents:** When an employee is struck by or strikes against an object, the impact often results in an injury. Impact incidents are also a leading cause of workplace deaths.

4: **Machine incidents:** Injuries to an employee caught by a moving machine as it rotates, slides, or presses. Failure to follow proper machine lockout/blockout procedures increases the injury risk.

If you know how your employees could get hurt on the job, you can do a better job of teaching them how to recognize, prevent, and protect against potential workplace injuries. It's all the more reason to make safety a priority.

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