



h RPG News h

A Publication of the Mississippi State Board of Registered Professional Geologists

Protecting the Public's Health, Safety, and Welfare

Spring, 2001

Members of the Board: Darrel Schmitz, President (Academia); Les Aultman, Vice President (Mining - Mineral Extraction); Stephen Ingram (Government); Charles Swann (At Large); and Winston Russell, (Environmental).

News of Interest

For those of you who may have missed it, the Board appointed Rick L. Ericksen as its Executive Director in July, 2000. Since his appointment, the Board has been able to catch up on many tasks which were in various stages of completion. With a full time employee the Board has now also been able to fully implement some of the mandated functions of the MSBRPG and the RPG Act of 1997.

Over the past several months, President Darrel Schmitz and Director Ericksen have been meeting with several state agencies, as well as private industry, who may be involved with matters governed or related to the RPG Act of 1997. The Board intends to maintain its proactive approach to the implementation of its governing statute. From initial indications it appears that these efforts are paying off. For starters, RPG's are in the regulations related to lignite mining and Brownfield. Currently underway is the inclusion of the services of RPG's related to Underground Storage Tank (UST) regulations and rules related to the requirements for the submission of applications for Solid Waste Siting(s). As time progresses the Board foresees further incorporation of the tenants of the RPG Act in regulatory functions which involve geology, geohydrology, geophysics, environmental remediation, etc.

Resignation Tendered by Ingram

Steve Ingram, who has been serving in the Government Sector, announced his resignation from the Board earlier this year. Steve has returned to academia to pursue an advanced degree in geology at the University of Mississippi. Ultimately, Steve's hard work and undaunted efforts helped lead to the enactment of professional geologic registration in Mississippi. His efforts towards professional registration began with the Geologic Task Force in 1995. He has served with commitment and dedication in several key positions with the Task Force and later with the Board. The Board wishes to acknowledge his hard work, long hours, and personal sacrifices he has made to promote and advance the profession of geology. The Board members further wish for his continued success in accomplishing the new goals which he has set forth for himself. His presence will be sorely missed by the Board and its Director.

Nominees Announced

The Board's Nominating Committee is pleased to announce its slate of nominees for the Academic and Government Sectors. The current Board members serving in these sectors are the Board's current President, Darrel Schmitz (Academia) and Stephen L. Ingram (Government).

The nominees for the Academic Sector are as follows:

- (1) Darrel Schmitz, (current Board member)
- (2) David Patrick
- (3) James Harris

Nominees for the Government Sector are as follows:

- (1) James May
- (2) Pat Phillips
- (3) Michael Wright

You will be receiving ballots, with brief biographies of each nominee shortly for your consideration and vote. This shall serve as notice, other nominations may be made, both pursuant to §73-63-9 (Mississippi Code, Amended 1972).

Enforcement/Disciplinary Actions

An increasing number of investigations concerning complaints have begun. To date, the Board has issued an admonishment/letter of concern to a non-registrant for the unauthorized practice of geology in the State of Mississippi and has reviewed and dismissed without prejudice

another case. Currently the Board is investigating two cases of unlicensed practice and one case related to a title violation.

Remember, you are the eyes and the ears of the Board. If you have knowledge of any practice violation do not hesitate to either file a complaint (found at the Board's web site) or contact the Board's Director. All information is kept confidential. If the concern has merit the Board may initiate an investigation on its own behalf. Remember that the public practice of geology must be done by or under the supervision of a Mississippi Registered Professional Geologist. Notify the Board of any appearance of or documentable evidence of violations related to the RPG Act of 1997.

Voluntary Continuing Education

The MSBRPG has been involved with and will continue to promote continuing education for its registrants and enrollees. Our sister state of Alabama has mandatory continuing education and many of our registrants are also members of that board. Additionally, states which have recently enacted geologic registration have mandatory continuing education requirements and last year the MS State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors implemented mandatory continuing education for its registrants based in a large degree to other similar boards requiring continuing education. Further it is also acknowledged that continuing education is critical to those who have become GIT's with the MSBRPG.

Since January 1, 1999 all incoming applicants must take and successfully pass both the ASBOG Fundamentals of Geology (FG) exam to become a GIT and the Practices of Geology (PG) exam to become a RPG. The PG exam tests the examinee's knowledge gained through four (4) years of exposure to geological problems encountered in the workplace. This exam covers a diverse set of geologic practice areas and it is to the benefit of the GIT, as well as the Board, to offer and be involved in courses, presentations, and seminars designed to enhance the GIT's knowledge, as well as a RPG's knowledge of geological work in areas which they may not be exposed to in their current geologic position(s).

To date we have had two, day-long seminars and a one-hour presentation, all which have had excellent attendances. Those attendance numbers reflect the desire of our enrollees and registrants to keep themselves current on matters which may impact their job, profession, and their career in geology.

We currently have an upcoming, day-long seminar planned (6 Professional Development Hours or 6 PDH's) in conjunction with the Petroleum Technology Transfer Council to be held May 23, 2001 on subsurface mapping techniques. This information is on the Board's web site and you may register online from that site. The cost of the seminar is free to government employees and \$25.00 for all others—this includes a buffet lunch and all course notes.

Advisory Committee News

One of the ongoing functions of the Advisory Committee has been to aid in the continuing education offerings through Tommy Dunlap, who chairs that subcommittee, along with Ron Tarbutton. The Advisory Committee has also been involved in maintaining archives of newspaper, journal, and other publication articles which deal with the practice of geology within the state of Mississippi in particular but also on a nationwide basis. Pat Phillips has been spearheading this effort for the Board. Pat also recently helped proctor the ASBOG exams which were given on March 16, 2001 at the Board's testing site at the Jackson Enterprise Center. It is anticipated that the Advisory Committee will continue its work with and for the Board to further the practice of geology in the state. If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact the committee's Chair, David Patrick at 601/266-4530 or the Board's office.

Members of the Advisory Committee:

David Patrick - Chair
Tommy Dunlap - Vice Chair
Jay Ferris
Del Gann
Rick Major

Patricia Phillips
Ken Ruchstuhl
Thad Shows
Tony Stuart
Ron Tarbutton

Other Items of Interest

Board President Schmitz is now also President-elect of the National Association of Geology Boards (ASBOG), having served as its Secretary and Treasurer during previous years. He will be assuming the Presidency of that organization in October, 2002.

The Board's Director, Rick Ericksen, has been designated by the American Association of Petroleum Geologists as its spokesperson for licensure efforts in the state of Texas. He has appeared on their behalf in both Senate and House Committee hearings speaking in support of the Texas bill. Favorable action by the Texas legislature is anticipated later this Spring. Currently there are three other states, in addition to Texas, which are involved in legislative efforts for geologic licensure: Utah, New York, and Colorado.

Next Offering of ASBOG Examinations

Fall ASBOG exam date is set for September 14, 2001 with an August 7, 2001 deadline for payment of exam fees. Please be aware that you may only take only one exam during a scheduled exam offering. In order to take the FG exam, you must have first submitted your application as an enrollee (GIT) and to sit for the PG exam you must have: 1) four years of geological work experience; 2) previously passed the FG exam;

and 3) a complete RPG application on file with the Board. Failure to have the necessary information on file will disallow you from sitting for either exam. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CONTACT THE BOARD!

Board's Web Site

Please visit the Board's web site from time to time. On it you can find items such as Memorandum of Understandings (MOU's), Attorney General Opinions, meeting dates and times, continuing education information, order forms for stamps/embossers, complaint and exam forms, etc. It also has archived issues of this newsletter - the RPG News, as well as other useful information. The web site address is: www.msbrpg.state.ms.us and the Board's e-mail address is: geology@msbrpg.state.ms.us

Also, the Board's phone number is 601/354-6370; fax 601/354-6032; mailing address: P.O. Box 22742, Jackson, MS 39225-2742; and physical address is: Jackson Enterprise Center, 931 Hwy 80 West, Jackson, MS 39204.

Comity/Reciprocity Agreements

The Board has agreements with Alabama and Georgia and it is anticipated that it will come to an agreement with Arkansas in the near future. We have placed both the Alabama and Georgia documents on our web site. Please refer to these documents should you wish to apply for licensure through these agreements.

Remember - Report Violations, It's Your Ethical Obligation

Should you become aware of any violations of the RPG Act or suspect them do not hesitate to contact the Board. Remember all information will be kept in the strictest confidence. Alternatively, you may file a complaint available on the Board's web site.



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Registered Professional
Geologists
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