

One Hundred Seventh Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

*Begun and held at the City of Washington on Wednesday,
the twenty-third day of January, two thousand and two*

Concurrent Resolution

Whereas,

founded in 1852, the American Society of Civil Engineers is the Nation's oldest national engineering society;

Whereas civil engineers work to constantly improve buildings, water systems, and other civil engineering works through research, demonstration projects, and the technical codes and standards developed by the American Society of Civil Engineers;

Whereas the American Society of Civil Engineers incorporates educational, scientific, and charitable efforts to advance the science of engineering, improve engineering education, maintain the highest standards of excellence in the practice of civil engineering, and ensure the public health, safety, and welfare;

Whereas the American Society of Civil Engineers represents the profession primarily responsible for the design, construction, and maintenance of the Nation's roads, bridges, airports, railroads, public buildings, mass transit systems, resource recovery systems, water systems, waste disposal and treatment facilities, dams, ports and waterways and other public facilities that are the foundation on which the Nation's economy stands and grows; and

Whereas the Nation's civil engineers, through innovation and the highest professional standards in the practice of civil engineering, protect the public health and safety and ensure the high quality of life enjoyed by the Nation's citizens: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) acknowledges the American Society of Civil Engineers for its 150th Anniversary;

(2) commends the many achievements of the Nation’s civil engineers; and

(3) encourages the American Society of Civil Engineers to continue its tradition of excellence in service to the profession of civil engineering and to the public.

Attest:

Clerk House of the Representatives.

Attest:

Secretary of the Senate.

Preface to the Second Edition

The 150th anniversary of the American Society of Civil Engineers is an important event. What's more, it is an exciting time. The anniversary date comes hard on the heels of the international millennium celebrations, and what better time to sum up the Society's history than after an uninterrupted century of growth and change. Publication of this new edition is just one of many celebratory events marking the anniversary.

ASCE's history from 1852 to 1974 was chronicled by former Executive Director William H. Wisely. His version has been edited to eliminate some redundancies, summarize some lengthy citations, and generally provide a more succinct presentation. A new opening chapter has been added to provide an overview of the Society as it exists today.

Wisely's book is still fascinating history. The early chapters show the parallels between the Society's evolution and the need for engineers in a growing nation. In addition to disseminating knowledge and bolstering the profession in many ways, one early technical accomplishment was taking the initiative on the adoption of standard time in this country, something we take for granted today.

Some parts are surprising, such as the 180-degree turnabout of ASCE policy on professional registration from opposition to encouragement. Discussions about engineering education and the five-year degree go on today. Other things have changed too: the cost of dues in the late nineteenth century and the price of real estate will amuse some readers. Other early ideas will seem quaint, such as the proposal to fine a member who failed to publish a paper or to contribute a scientific document, map, plan, or model to the Society. The fine was to have been \$10, equal to the dues in 1880.

ASCE has also helped its members in some very tangible ways. Wisely tells how the Society waived dues for some members during the Great Depression and again for those who served during the two world wars. The Society also helped engineers who were out of work—through efforts by Local Sections to find jobs for their colleagues, and through fund-raising to help those in dire financial straits. He also reports on the Society's efforts with the Engineering Societies Service Bureau, which helped engineers find work and helped establish ASCE's stance regarding the unionization of engineers.

Wisely also discusses ASCE's long tradition of public service, including investigating disasters such as the Ashtabula, Ohio, bridge failure in 1877 and the Tacoma Narrows Bridge failure in 1940. Once again, in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, ASCE has sponsored teams to investigate the collapse of the World Trade Center towers and the damage sustained by the Pentagon.

ASCE's yearly *Official Register* updates in detail some of the material William Wisely included in his first edition. The ASCE web site (www.asce.org) and the *Official Register* also provide a wealth of easily accessible information.

ASCE has grown and prospered during its 150 years. This book is a tribute to the profession and its professional society, and to their accomplishments. As we enter the new century, ASCE not only continues to provide vast benefits for its members but also to be at the forefront of engineering knowledge and expertise.

VIRGINIA FAIRWEATHER
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