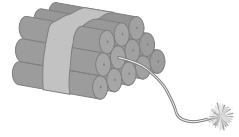


The Primer



Newsletter of the Golden West Chapter, International Society of Explosives Engineers
23633 Brewster Drive, Columbia, CA 95310

Volume 20

Winter 2009

Issue 4

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The Primer is published
four times per year
on the web site of the
Golden West Chapter
of the ISEE:

www.iseegoldenwest.org

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Co-President's Message... (Bill first)

GOOD BYE TO 2009

As we prepare for the Holiday Season we can look back at the year that was. 2009 was a year that we fondly can say is now behind us. It taught us that everything can change in a moment. We must prepare for the down cycles as we take advantage of the good times. As a wise old sage once prayed, "Dear Lord, help me not to screw up the next good times."

2009 was not a good time for many in our business. Hopefully you were able to make money in this economic period and stay employed. I hope that 2010 is a better year for us all. If nothing else it makes us appreciate what we have and take care of what we have been able to obtain. The one thing we can hope for is that someday everyone realizes that the "Green Economy" can not exist without the necessary raw materials to supply the solar panels, wind turbines, smart grids, fuel efficient vehicles, high speed internet for everyone to name just a few things that make up the "Green Economy". The infrastructure that is required will need vast quantities of construction materials, namely sand, gravel and stone which is where we become an important part of this new economy. Not to mention the requirements of our "old" economy, the need to rebuild our roads, bridges and dams. The future appears to be bright and as we go into 2010 I wish all of you a Happy Holiday Season. Be safe and I look forward to seeing you in good economic times to come.

Bill Warfield

The Primer

Co-President's Message (cont.) ... (Wes this time)

On pages 4 and 5 you will find information on our 2009 business meeting. Most of it is self-explanatory. One added item is that our program will be a talk by Jack Masson on his experiences on a team disarming anti-personnel mines. Should be quite interesting. (I forgot to ask him if he still has all his fingers....) We're getting indications from some of the long-time members that they are planning to attend also. Claudia and I are driving up from Arizona to attend. It would be nice to talk with some of our old friends that we haven't seen in a few years. It's hard to believe that we made the move in 1995. Even harder to believe that I've been retired seven years now.

With the new year, we will be sending invoices to our loyal advertisers (I prefer to call them sponsors) to renew their ads for 2010. Without their support, this newsletter and our website would not be possible. We put the sponsors ads in The Primer and also on our website. If you click on the sponsor's name on our opening page, you will be taken to their website, or to their e-mail address if they don't have a website. Show them you appreciate their support. Take advantage of the services they offer whenever you can.

I had the question asked of me whether it was necessary for a person to be an explosives engineer in order to belong to the chapter or, for that matter, the ISEE. The answer is absolutely not. If one defines an explosives engineer as a person who uses engineering principles to design blasts to accomplish a particular goal, many of our members would not fall within that category. In reviewing the current membership roster, there are probably only 12 to 15 people who would fit that description. On the other hand, many of our members are engaged in providing supporting services or the necessary equipment with which to do our job. Many others are in the business of providing explosive products, including assistance in the use of such products and occasionally doing the blast design and loading as part of their service. Still others work in the regulatory field. Some of us are even retired, but unable to escape the fascinating field of blasting. In short, if you have an interest in explosives and blasting, you belong in the chapter and/or in the ISEE.

(continued on page 3)

Co-President's Message (cont.) ...

As our industry has evolved, much but not all of the work of explosives engineering has been removed from the field blaster and placed with supervisory people. There is a trend toward using standard blast designs to accomplish many of the production blasting situations found in surface mines, quarries and large construction projects. In spite of this, there is still a need for designing critical blasts, many of which can be quite small, but still requiring a high degree of expertise. It is in these situations that the explosives engineer is at his best. In order to have properly trained individuals to handle all types of blast designs in the future, we need to make sure that today's younger blasters receive the training and education that will prepare them to take over these responsibilities. This is where I feel the chapter can have an impact. We need to make affordable workshops available for training these individuals. Employers should also assist by allowing their individuals to attend the workshops and training sessions.

Quite a few years ago, I helped the state of Arizona by training some of their younger blasters in their highway department. ADOT's blasting usually consisted of the emergency removal of boulders and other secondary blasting. It had always been handled by one experienced blaster in each of the various regions. One year they suddenly came to the realization that almost all of the old-timers had retired and they didn't have any trained replacements. (They had one, but he was really spread thin.) It took a bit of classroom time and then a couple days in an abandoned quarry where the students actually put their new-found knowledge to use on a field of boulders. Since then, thankfully with the oversight of the one experienced individual, they have managed quite well.

Which comes first, the chicken or the egg, the workshops or the students? We can't wait to get students before setting up a workshop. We need to make them available and then work at getting the people to attend. Let me hear from some of you blasting contractors out there. Do you agree? We need your input.

This is our last newsletter for 2009. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to You and Yours.

Wes Bender

The International Society of Explosives Engineers, Golden West Chapter

announces its

Annual Business Meeting

When: Saturday, January 9, 2010
No Host Bar and socializing - 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
Meeting to follow

Where: **Cattlemens Steakhouse**
2000 Taylor Road, Roseville, CA (916) 782-5587
(where Taylor Road intersects I-80)

Menu: Choice of:
Broiled Top Sirloin Steak
Teriyaki Chicken
Grilled Pacific Salmon
Marinara Cheese Ravioli

plus Baked Potato, Vegetables, Salad, Sourdough Bread,
Ranch Style Beans and Coffee or Tea

Cost:
2009 Chapter Member (and a spouse or guest): **No Charge.**
Non-Members and additional Member's guests: \$25.00 per person.

Persons joining the Chapter prior to dinner: **No Charge.**
(\$25.00 dues payable on joining. See next page.)

Registration: Please RSVP on or before January 1, 2010 to:
Wes Bender at (520) 648-3581 wbender@frontier.com
Carey Haughy at (209) 533-0127, ext 23 carey@bluemtnmin.com

(continued)

The Golden West Chapter appreciates the hardships that the current economic crisis has brought to our members. For this reason, the Board of Directors of the Chapter voted to reward our loyal members by picking up their dinner tab at this meeting. We also felt that it would be appropriate to include spouses (or a guest). To take advantage of this offer, one must have been a paid up member for the year 2009.

We also wish to encourage prospective members in our region to join the Chapter. To further this goal, the Board has voted to provide that a prospective member who joins the Chapter and who pays the \$25.00 annual dues prior to the dinner meeting, will also be able to take advantage of our offer of a free dinner for both himself and his spouse. Applications will be available at the door. This offer is also extended to past Chapter members whose membership may have lapsed.

Please note that this is for dinner only and does not include the cost of any wine, beer or other adult beverages.

For our program, Jack Masson has offered to make a presentation on his experiences in supervising the disarming of anti-personnel mines. This should be a very interesting program.

Among other items of business to be addressed at the meeting, the main one will be the election of Officers and Board members for 2010. A slate of candidates has been formed. While we will also be taking nominations from the floor, you can attend the meeting without fear of being 'railroaded' into a position that you didn't want.


We encourage you to come out and renew old friendships or, if you are not already a member, to find out what we are all about.

To register for the meeting, please contact either Wes Bender or Carey Haughey as indicated on the previous page. **Please do so on or before January 1, 2010.** Cattlemens needs a guaranteed head count on January 2nd.

If you do register for this meeting, please make every attempt to attend. The Golden West Chapter will be responsible for paying for any no-shows.

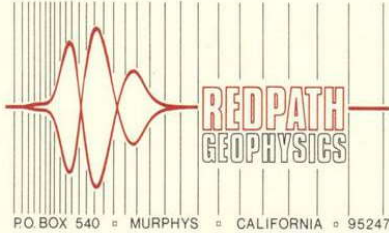
THANK YOU.

The Primer



Bill Warfield
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Carey Haughy , Secretary	(209) 533-0127, ext 23	Gerald Fulghum , Treasurer	(916) 481-1421
Sandy Figuers , Board Member	(925) 606-8595	Joseph Johnson , Board Member	

Back in the Day... with Wes Bender

With today's tight restrictions on who can purchase explosives and from whom, it is hard to remember those days when you could walk into your local hardware store and purchase perhaps a stick or two of dynamite and a few blasting caps. The major changes started with the Organized Crime Control Act in the late '60s, tightened a bit further as law enforcement agencies got into the game, and then seriously changed following 9/11.

Transportation of explosives had always been regulated, but enforcement in California was usually limited to oversight of those licensed by the CHP or to prosecuting others if they got caught transporting illegally. Licensed transporters were required to carry insurance or a bond and were restricted to what routes they could use to make deliveries. Today the cost of being able to transport explosives has pretty much restricted such activity to just a very few properly equipped companies.

Storage of explosives in California years ago was mostly regulated by the State Fire Marshal's office and by the California Division of Forestry or, in larger metropolitan areas, by the local Fire Departments. In many areas, storage was in permanent magazines that had been used in mining or logging operations or in portable magazines obtained from explosives suppliers. There was a wide variation in what was acceptable, depending upon the jurisdiction. Some magazines were quite good and provided protection against fire and bullets while others were little more than tin sheds. Counties that had a history of mining and logging were usually easier to work with because they had practical experience in the storage and use of explosives. Urban counties had little such experience and it was usually reflected in their approach to storage, use of explosives and the permit issuing process.

Users of explosives could typically walk in to the local CDF office and after filling out a form and paying a fee, walk out with an explosives permit. Upon presentation to the local explosives dealer, the permit allowed the user to obtain the explosives that he needed.

Over time, as the explosive hazard was perceived to evolve from fire and accidental explosion to one of unlawful use of explosives, the jurisdiction gradually was removed from the fire agencies and placed with law enforcement agencies. This was mainly brought about in the '60s and '70s as activists from various groups tried to get their hands on explosives in order to use them to further their cause(s). There was one particular couple, the T.....s, who delighted in blowing up the electric company's sub-stations. Another couple, who purchased explosives to clear stumps on property in Placer County, instead used them to blow up a jewelry store in Santa Barbara. In another instance, approximately a ton of explosive was removed from a hydroelectric project in central California and used to try to extort money from a Lake Tahoe casino. Attempts to defuse the bomb detonated it and practically destroyed the casino. It was no wonder that law enforcement agencies began to demand a say in regulating explosives.

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(continued from page 9)

Today there are very few suppliers of explosive materials in northern and central California, but in the '60s and '70s you didn't have to drive very far to find one. Just from memory alone (and yes I know I'm probably leaving out a few), you could purchase explosives in Arcata, Susanville, Middletown, Gridley, Quincy, Nevada City, Auburn, Browns Valley, Lincoln, San Rafael, Rancho Cordova, Plymouth, Sutter Creek, Merced, Fresno and Porterville. Now that is quite a number of retail outlets. I'm sure there were quite a few additional ones in southern California.

Many of the dealers were hardware stores. When the ATF got involved and brought with them their additional paperwork and storage regulations, many of these dealers decided to get out of the business. There just wasn't enough profit in small explosives sales to justify the additional expense and record keeping. The persons who were hurt were the small weekend miners, farmers and small construction companies. If their needs were small, they had to drive long distances to obtain explosives. Two-component explosives offered some relief for a while, but the handwriting was on the wall. Eventually many small contractors either avoided rock jobs, or else they sub-contracted with blasting contractors to shoot the rock for them. It was pretty obvious to me, when I retired from the explosives distribution business in 1982, that eventually most of the work would be done using larger distributors and shotside deliveries or, in the case of small projects, those few blasting contractors who elected to stay in the business. Insurance was another big factor, but that subject is probably better left for another day.

Even though pre-ATF regulations regarding transactions were not as strict, most explosives dealers and distributors kept records that were adequate. Granted, a few did not and we were surely better off for it when they got out of the business. At Alpha Hardware in Nevada City, we copied the retail purchaser's explosives permit and also required them to make an entry in a permanent journal, in their own handwriting, showing their name, address, drivers license number, what they were purchasing and the intended use. Some balked, but our policy was either make the entry or no explosives. It was pretty much left up to the seller as to whether or not to sell to some individuals. I recall one instance where a gentleman with a newly obtained permit wanted to purchase some dynamite, fuse and blasting caps. Everything was in order, except that it was obvious he had just been to a three or four martini lunch. He wasn't staggering drunk, but was definitely impaired. I was very uncomfortable turning over explosive materials to him in that condition. I finally agreed that I would do so, but only if he would go back to CDF and have them endorse his permit, indicating they thought he was in good enough condition to have possession of explosives. Needless to say, he didn't return that day. Now, don't get me wrong. I don't have anything against three martini lunches. I suppose I've taken part in a few. (Had to say that so Rich Strohm wouldn't drag out an old picture he took and demand an explanation.....). It's just that alcohol and explosives do not mix. But then I guess we knew that even before the ATF made our lives more interesting.

How Come???

.....those promoting the theory of global warming don't seem to heed the 1974 words of Richard Feynman (1918-1988), physicist, who won the 1965 Nobel prize for physics for his work in quantum mechanics:

"There is one feature I notice that is generally missing in "cargo cult science"... It's a kind of scientific integrity, a principle of scientific thought that corresponds to a kind of utter honesty—a kind of leaning over backwards. For example, if you're doing an experiment you should report everything that you think might make it invalid— not only what you think is right about it: other causes that could possibly explain your results; and things you thought of that you've eliminated by some other experiment., and how they worked... Details that could throw doubt on your interpretation must be given, if you know them... If you make a theory, for example, and advertise it, or put it out, then you must also put down all the facts that disagree with it, as well as those that agree with it."

(For an enlightening treatise on the subject of Global Warming, read the article by Howard Bloom in the December 17th, 2009 issue of the Wall Street Journal titled, *Climate Change is Nature's Way.*)

More words to live by.....

Ignorance might be by choice, but stupidity is hereditary.

Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.

Life is simpler when you plow around the stump.

You only need two tools in life: WD-40 and Duct Tape. If it doesn't move and should, use the WD-40. If it shouldn't move and does, use the Duct Tape.