For 2004, National Engineers Week Takes on the World

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"New Faces of Engineering" Goes International; "Connecting the World to Engineering" Features Web-Based Forums and Teleconferences. It's a big world after all.

Underscoring a decisive recognition of the globalization of professional engineering, National Engineers Week 2004, February 22-28, co-chaired by The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE / IEEE-USA) and the Fluor Corporation, celebrates the international engineering community with two key programs.

New Faces of Engineering, developed in 2003 to showcase rising young stars in America's engineering profession, has expanded to include engineers from around the world. By promoting contributions of young engineers and their benefits to people worldwide, New Faces provides stimulation and incentive for college-level students and encourages younger students to consider engineering careers. The second major program for 2004, Connecting the World to Engineering, spearheaded by Fluor, establishes a global dialogue with a new web-based communication and discussion vehicle for engineering students, young professionals, and business leaders, targeted at engineering undergraduates to stoke and maintain interest in their chosen careers.

"As National Engineers Week enters its second half century, it is staking out a bold new profile, one that draws on the latest technology and spotlights individuals at the cutting edge of a profession responsible for revolutionary achievements at every level of society in every part of the world," said Joseph V. Lillie, chair of National Engineers Week 2004 and IEEE's lead EWeek volunteer. "The highest goals and aspirations of engineers require all of us to ensure the vitality and prosperity of our profession. That is the message at the heart of National Engineers Week."

New Faces of Engineering and Connecting the World give that message substance, Lillie says, and confirm EWeek's commitment to the broad spectrum of engineering today.

All National Engineers Week sponsoring societies may nominate candidates for New Faces from industry and academia. Nominees must hold an engineering degree, be employed as an engineer from two to five years, and have been involved in projects that significantly impact public welfare or further professional development and growth. The Top 16 New Faces will be featured in USA Today during National Engineers Week, with all nominees included on the EWeek website at www.eweek.org. Nominations should be submitted to Kelly Cunningham at klcpr@belalantic.net by Friday, October 31.

Connecting the World online discussion forums will explore electrical, civil, mechanical and other engineering disciplines, industries such as aerospace, IT, and chemical, and opportunities in geographical locations all over the Earth. During National Engineers Week, prominent corporate leaders will also host teleconference discussions on the latest issues and developments with engineering societies and their student sections, along with university and corporate partners.

National Engineers Week will also see the return of a wide array of events that have proven extraordinarily popular. Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day, now in its fourth year, is slated for February 26, 2004. One of the week's star activities encourages engineers -- particularly women engineers -- to make the world of engineering come alive for girls. Since its inception, an estimated one million girls have experienced engineering firsthand each year, with more than 110 organizations participating in 2003. Programs ranged from 20 girls working with members of the National Society of Black Engineers' North Carolina State University chapter to 3,000 girls reached by the New York State Department of Transportation in Poughkeepsie.

The National Engineers Week Future City Competition returns for its 12th year and expands to 36 regional sites. In 2003, more than 30,000 middle school students in more than 1,000 schools from 31 regions joined in what has become one of the nation's largest engineering education programs and one of the most successful educational outreach programs of any kind. In all, more than 125,000 students have participated, learning the potential of careers in engineering, math and science through hands-on applications. Notably, 7,500 engineers volunteer 225,000 service hours annually to the competition.

Future City invites students, working under the guidance of teachers and volunteer engineers, to build computer and three-dimensional scale models of cities of tomorrow. Students defend their designs before a panel of engineer judges at the competition, and write an essay -- this year's topic is improving the lives of senior citizens through the use of plastic products or services. Students begin work in the fall and participate in regional competitions in January. First place regional teams win a trip to Washington for national finals February 23-25, 2004. For more information, visit www.futurecity.org.

The Sightseers Guide to Engineering (www.engineeringsights.org), created by the National Society of Professional Engineers in 2001, continues to draw fans. Celebrating engineering marvels from subtle to spectacular in all 50 states, the site invites the public to recognize and appreciate the achievements of America's engineers. Visitors can even submit their own favorites.

Another website, discoverengineering.org, launched in 1999, is also still going strong. With information targeted to middle school students on the how and why of becoming an engineer, the site uses such wonders of engineering as roller coasters and CD players to pique the interests of young people and includes hundreds of links to related educational, professional, and corporate sites.

A further outreach to young people is DiscoverE. Aimed at K-12, it continues to provide thousands of engineers with quality educational materials that help them reach more than five million students and teachers every year through classroom visits and extracurricular programs.

Of special importance during National Engineers Week 2004 will be Visioneering 2004: Security of the Future, taped in early February and scheduled for broadcast nationwide to up to eight million students on February 27 on Cable Channel One, sponsored by the SMU School of Engineering and SMU's Institute for Engineering Education.

EWeek 2004 will also see the presentation of several engineering achievement awards, including the third annual Asian American Engineer of
the Year Award, given by the Chinese Institute of Engineers/USA and recognizing outstanding Asian American professionals in academe, public service and corporations. Dr. Samuel Ting and Dr. Chih-tang Sah shared top honors in 2003. For more information, visit www.cie-usa.org.

The National Academy of Engineering will present the annual $500,000 Charles Stark Draper Prize, the profession’s highest honor for engineering achievement and innovation, and the biennial Bernard M. Gordon Prize for Innovation in Engineering and Technology Education, also valued at $500,000, at a black-tie dinner on February 24. The 2003 Draper Prize went to Ivan A. Getting and Bradford W. Parkinson for their individual efforts in the development of the Global Positioning System. For more information, visit www.nae.edu/awards.

Information on these and all other National Engineers Week programs and events is available at www.eweek.org.

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