

The IEEE BEEP

BULLETIN FOR ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONICS ENGINEERS

New Oregon Section Web Portal and On-line BEEP by Ed Perkins, Section Chair

The Section has contracted with Kavi for a new web portal with self-service email list management, provision for electronic delivery of the BEEP and other information and services to the members. The conversion from our old web site was completed on August 13 and the new site is now "live".

The new web site is at the same URL as our old site: www.ieee-or.org

This is the last printed issue of the BEEP. We will publish a yearly notice mailed to all members specifying where to find out about Section and Chapter events as required by IEEE. To receive notice about upcoming events and news about the Section, you must provide IEEE with a valid email address. You can do this on-line by visiting the Section web page at www.ieee-or.org and selecting the "Join/Renew" link and following the instructions.

The Kavi system will provide a private area which will facilitate the work of the Section Executive Committee in managing Section operations. It provides a better calendar mechanism for posting our monthly meetings and events. It will also provide us with ability to handle on-line credit card payments for workshops, seminars and other paid events.

During September we will be finishing the remaining construction on the new web site. If you have any questions or comments, or would like to help out please contact the Section officers or your Chapter officers – see the "Contact Us" link on the web page.

Speak at Sections Congress 2005

The Sections Congress 2005 Program Committee is still accepting nominations for session speakers. SC 2005 will be held 14-17 October 2005 at the Tampa Marriott Waterside, Tampa, Florida, USA. The theme of the event is "Promoting a World-Class Volunteer Community". The three program tracks are: Membership; Section Operations; and Relationships. The Relationships track is entirely new for 2005, and will address the relationships between IEEE Sections and internal and external organizations and the community.

To nominate a speaker, visit <http://www.ieee.org/sc2005> and click on "Nominate a Speaker". Each submission allows for three speaker nominations. If you'd like to submit more

speaker nominations, please submit another form. The deadline for submitting speaker nominations is 15 September 2004.

Please note that sponsors or funding support should also be identified at the time the speaker is nominated. If no funding support is immediately identifiable for a particular speaker, the nomination may still be submitted, as sponsorship may be identified at a later time. Session descriptions can be viewed at <http://www.ieee.org/sc2005> by clicking on the link for "Session descriptions."

If you have any questions, please email sc-coordinator@ieee.org. Thank you in advance for your assistance in making the Sections Congress 2005 Program a success.

Nominations Sought For New Faces of Engineering 2005

The successful New Faces of Engineering program highlights the outstanding achievements of young engineers around the world. In 2005, five select IEEE members will be among the New Faces profiled on the EWeek Web site, and the top nominee from each sponsoring society will appear in USA Today during EWeek 2005, 20-26 February. Nominations must be received by Friday, 29 October. For more information and a nomination form, visit http://www.eweek.org/site/News/Eweek/2005_Nominations.shtml. For more information on last year's New Faces, see <http://www.eweek.org/site/Engineers/newfaces2004/index.shtml>.

Kudos!

Our local Communications Society Chapter has won the 2004 Communications Society Chapter Achievement award. Congratulations to all involved.

Congratulations to New Senior Members of the IEEE

Douglas V. Hall
Samuel C. Perkins
Marek A. Perkowski
Martine B. Wedlake

IEEE-USA Testifies for Balance in Copyright Policy

WASHINGTON – Copyright owners should not be permitted to restrict the development of technology having non-copyright-infringing uses, unless the developer actively and independently induces a copyright infringement, Andrew C. Greenberg testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Greenberg, vice-chair of the IEEE-USA Intellectual Property Committee (IPC) and an attorney with Carlton Fields, P.A. of Tampa, Fla., testified on the Inducing Infringement of Copyrights Act of 2004 (S.2560). IEEE-USA

High-Tech Employment Shrinks in Second Quarter, Despite Positive Signs on Unemployment Rates

WASHINGTON – The number of employed computer professionals dropped from the first to second quarters, according to data compiled by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). At the same time, high-tech unemployment rates also fell.

BLS reported a decline of 131,000 employed computer software engineers in the second quarter vs. the first quarter (725,000 vs. 856,000). Employed computer scientists and systems analysts have fallen 51,000 (621,000 vs. 672,000) during the same period, while computer hardware engineers dropped 3,000 (83,000 vs. 86,000). Computer programmers experienced a fall of 16,000 (575,000 vs. 591,000).

Bucking the trend, the number of employed electrical and electronics engineers (EEs) rose by 24,000 from the first to second quarters (351,000 vs. 327,000). The increase, however, is still below the 363,000 quarterly average in 2003.

"The EE employment figure is encouraging, and we're interested to see if the trend continues," IEEE-USA President John Steadman said. "But we're most concerned with our shrinking

high-tech workforce, much of which is attributable to the offshoring of high-tech jobs."

BLS reported the EE unemployment rate, which stood at 5.3 percent in the first quarter, was 0.8 percent in the second quarter. While the increase in EE employment would indicate a falling unemployment rate, sampling errors could account for the substantial quarterly decrease, according to statistical consultant Richard Ellis of Ellis Research Services. A rate for computer hardware engineers wasn't reported because no one in this job classification among the survey population claimed to be unemployed last quarter.

The unemployment rate for computer software engineers fell from 3.3 percent in the first quarter to 2.9 percent in the second. For computer scientists and system analysts, the rate went from 6.7 percent to 4.0 percent; for computer programmers it fell from 9.5 percent to 5.7 percent.

"Sadly, part of the unemployment improvements might be because some technical professionals have become discouraged and are leaving the field," Steadman said.

New IEEE Journal Launched

Twenty years ago, the field of Robotics was galvanized by the creation of an IEEE Journal devoted to the topic. We now have the opportunity to do the same for the field of Automation.

This summer saw the premier of IEEE *Transactions on Automation Science and Engineering* (T-ASE), an exciting new journal from the IEEE Robotics and Automation Society.

T-ASE reaches beyond mass production to include interdisciplinary approaches from computer science, control systems, electrical engineering, mathematics, mechanical engineering, operations research and other fields.

In My Opinion

by John L. Stewart, Life Member

Sending high-tech jobs to other countries is only part of a trend that is reducing domestic needs for well trained engineers and physicists. Other factors are involved that should be recognized.

First is the natural desire for any company to reduce costs, especially if there is a threat of competition. Anything that can improve efficiency so that production can be increased without increases in payroll will be sought. This includes management practices as well as use of better machinery and equipment. The advent of the modern computer has reduced the required number of white collar employees.

Another factor is the trend towards companies acquiring other companies, especially if products are compatible. The total number of employees in all categories including engineering can be reduced where any level of duplication can be demonstrated.

The most troubling trend has companies creating satellites in other countries where product design as well as production can be carried out. Product research and development will likely be carried out elsewhere with a natural trend to do more basic research. The companies with offshore facilities may actually enjoy increases in stock values. They become little more than importers, warehouse, distributors, promoters and advertisers, and even politicians. Such companies need relatively few well trained engineers. Clerical jobs can be transferred elsewhere as well.

Engineers are not alone in fearing job losses. The medical-biological industry is threatened. Labor costs are

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