The President’s Message

It is hard to believe that the holiday season is upon us. I truly wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year. My hope and prayer is that we all have a successful and prosperous new year for our families and for our businesses.

GaSHE has come a long way this year. One of our most successful changes has been the implementation of “hospitality night”, which takes place prior to our quarterly meetings. This has resulted in a remarkable increase in attendance. This success is due to the hard work of your Board of Directors and the Ambassador Task Force. I have much appreciation and gratitude for each and am so thankful for their support of GaSHE’s mission and vision.

Our Annual Convention and Trade Show is coming up March 9-11 in McRae. We have made some positive changes to sponsorship opportunities; I hope you will select the one that best fits your needs. This year, we will be including hotel accommodations with some levels of sponsorship, this is to show our appreciation for our sponsors. We know that our society would not be successful without the support of our business partners and vice versa, so we will continue to work to develop and grow these relationships.

If you have not participated in our annual meeting, I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity. You will be sure to find further relationships and develop business contacts that can greatly benefit you. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us or refer to our website. Speaking of websites, ours is undergoing a makeover and I hope to unveil it at our December meeting. It will better reflect the progress we have made and our vision to become the premiere healthcare engineering society in the southeast.

I am very pleased to announce that our society will be offering our annual conference and trade show at no cost to our hospital engineers. We will be paying for accommodations and meals at this year’s events, so all you have to do is provide your own transportation. We require that you send in your registration form ASAP so that we can make arrangements at the lodge. As you know, rooms fill up quickly at the lodge and we will be providing overflow accommodations in nearby Dublin, Ga. If you would like to stay at the lodge in McRae and are willing to share a room with someone, please let us know, as that will improve your chances of getting a room there. We will have more details available the first of January.

If you are not a member of our society, I would like to give you a little information on who we are. The Georgia Society of Healthcare Engineers is an organization that greatly benefits its members. Our objective is to give our members the tools and information they need for growth and enrichment in their careers. At present, we have approximately 200 members who attend our quarterly meetings. This has resulted in a remarkable increase in membership. If you are not a member of our society, I would like to give you a little information on who we are. The Georgia Society of Healthcare Engineers is an organization that greatly benefits its members. Our objective is to give our members the tools and information they need for growth and enrichment in their careers. At present, we have approximately 200 members who attend our quarterly meetings. This has resulted in a remarkable increase in membership. If you have not participated in our annual meeting, I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity. You will be sure to find further relationships and develop business contacts that can greatly benefit you. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us or refer to our website. Speaking of websites, ours is undergoing a makeover and I hope to unveil it at our December meeting. It will better reflect the progress we have made and our vision to become the premiere healthcare engineering society in the southeast.

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A veteran marketing professional with strong credentials in relationship management, organizational development and business networking strategy, Stacey Chapman brings a creative focus and best practice approach to her clients and assignments. A recent graduate of the Buckhead Business Association's Leadership Buckhead program, Stacey works passionately to create connections among those with whom she works, whether in her role with Heery International or through her involvement with numerous charitable and philanthropic organizations. Most recently, Georgia Trend magazine recognized Stacey among Georgias 40 under 40, which showcases achievements in business, government, politics, education and non-profit.

Since 2008, Stacey has worked at Heery helping define the company’s reputation as a leader of response to emerging trends and the marketplace. She takes personal pride in the strong relationships and connections she has developed with numerous business owners, and the many opportunities with some of Georgia’s leading healthcare systems. Both a recognized leader in marketing professional services, she has spent approximately 15 years helping companies serve their clients better.

The Buzz of Commissioning in Energy Efficiency
By Emily Violette, LEED AP - Heery International, Inc.

In this day and age, many of the buzz words circulating in the building construction industry revolve around energy savings. In particular, Commissioning has developed as a buzz word that is used quite frequently, yet in practice it has still remained somewhat of a misunderstood entity. Commissioning by definition is a process in which equipment and building systems, whether electrical, plumbing and/or mechanical are tested to verify their function according to their design and specifications. As a result of these performance tests, the intended energy savings promised in the design phase is confirmed, therefore leaving the owner with a building system that operates to today’s standards of energy efficiency. Something that is often overlooked when the word commissioning travels from person to person to project is that it is an actual process, not just the testing of a completed building design. In order to provide the owner with a complete and functional building, the process begins during design development and follows through to testing during the Construction Administration phase. It is important to know that it is throughout the entire process that energy savings are realized, not only through testing of the building systems and equipment.

During the design development phase of a project, the commissioning Agent performs design reviews. It is during these design reviews that energy savings potential from a design perspective can be most helpful. By giving a 3rd party’s view of the design at this stage, a fresh look can lead to utilizing different energy savings methods, such as heat recovery, or water side and airside economizer, not already incorporated in the design. Energy savings methods such as these tend to have rather large impact on a design, so it is best to have them incorporated early in the project.

During the construction administration phase, the commissioning Agent begins to transition from a role of aiding in the design of a project to that of implementing it as the building undergoes construction. In this stage, the Commissioning Agent becomes less of a behind the scenes advocate and more of an onsite representative that tracks the coordination of the project. Part of the Commissioning Agent’s responsibility is to make sure that what is specified in the construction documents is actually installed, constructed and operates as it is intended. It is during this time that installation, calibration, and operation are verified and tested, and energy cost savings in faulty installation and inaccurate measuring processes are more readily prevented.

All phases of the commissioning process focus on the up to date energy savings methods proven to be beneficial to today’s lean toward sustainability measures in building construction. One of the key aspects of commissioning that helps keep this process running smoothly and effectively is by communicating the system design information between the owner, engineer and contractor, the commissioning agent can aid in bringing problems to light that may impact the schedule and operation of the building, so that the final phase of testing that the building was in fact constructed per the design intent, and all of the energy savings methods will successfully provide energy savings.

Society Benefits for Healthcare Engineers

The GASHE quarterly meeting held December 10, 2010 at McRae, Georgia was highly educational and we had a great time visiting with our peers and partners. We’ve seen tremendous improvements over the last couple of years for the society and the healthcare engineers are really making it out if they are not attending. Attendance from the engineers needs to improve. The educational programs that are offered keep us up to date on the constant changes in healthcare trends. The various topics discussed are anything from mechanical rooms, boilers, cooling towers, commissioning-retro-commission, infection control issues, the latest code changes, budgets and cost saving ideas. As engineers we need to have a good understanding of this information in our field and its all free. There are 50 years of engineering experience and more for us to draw upon from these meetings. The engineers that attend these meetings are valuable resources for you to get information from, they have solutions to the problems you are dealing with and don’t have to re-invent the wheel each time you encounter a difficult problem at your facility. They share JCAHO info and the latest best practices on the last inspection at their facility: this information will be of great value to each of you.

By attending these meetings it shows leadership: you are ambitious and constantly seeking additional education in your field and its all free. Cleanup can be a challenge because the liquid metal can seep into nooks and crannies and continue to evolve easily exceeded when mercury is spilled or otherwise released in the work environment. Additionally the cleanup values may result in weakness, fatigue, anorexia, weight loss, and disturbance of gastrointestinal function.

The OSHA PEL for mercury vapor is 0.1 mg/m3 (milligrams per cubic meter) based on an 8-hour time-weighted average. These levels are low and easily exceeded when mercury vapor accumulates on surfaces and then vaporized and be inhaled by unaware workers. Mercury can also be absorbed through the skin. Short exposure to high levels of mercury can cause severe respiratory irritation, digestive disturbances, and marked renal damage. Chronic exposure to mercury may result in weakness, fatigue, anxiety, weakness, weight loss, and disturbance of gastrointestinal function.

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