

**NORTH-CENTRAL SECTION
THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA**

Report to Council, October 2007

The annual report provides a summary of the past year's accomplishments and the coming year's initiatives, summarized for the most part under the topical headings of the Section's Strategic Plan.

Summary, The State of The Section:

In 1990, the North-Central Section Management Board initiated a long-range planning effort to enhance meeting quality and marketing, which has generally been successful. Since 1990, meeting attendance has averaged around 600 (this includes joint-meeting attendance figures) and because of this, and the fiscal prudence of local committees, revenues from meetings usually have increased. Our meeting in Akron, Ohio, in 2006 had 546 attendees. A joint meeting with the South-Central Section in Lawrence, Kansas, in 2007 had 517 registrants. Planning is underway for future meetings. A 2008 section meeting in Evansville, Indiana, and a 2010 meeting in Rockford, Illinois, are confirmed. The originally confirmed venue for the 2009 meeting, however, has had to be changed, and we have been attempting to locate a new site.

The Section had a 2006-2007 fiscal-year-end balance of \$111,266. This balance is a slight decrease over the previous year, as significant funds were transferred to the GSA Foundation during the fiscal year. If we would not have transferred funds to the Foundation, we would have had a significant increase due to the fiscal prudence of the local committee running the combined section meeting in Lawrence. Previously, our 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 fiscal years showed a significant increase, due in large part to the excellent organizing and fiscal prudence of our Minneapolis 2005 and Akron 2006 organizing committees. The end-of-year balances of the Section have generally been increasing since December 2000. The 30 June 2007 balance more than exceeded the Management Board's target: to have assets approximately equal to the cost of one typical-sized annual meeting plus operating costs, to provide stability and to ensure continuity of Section activities. For perspective, the dues income for the Section is near to the general operating costs of the Section, hence, to support other programs, the Section must continue to ensure income from the Scientific Meetings Program. As the financial state of the Section has stabilized, the Board has dedicated its fiscal resources to student support programs and to other GSA strategic initiatives, including contributions to the GSA Foundation. The Management Board approved a contribution of \$10,000 to the GSA Foundation in July of 2007. Thus the unrestricted net assets of the Section as of 30 September 2007 were \$105,419, less than that as of 30 June.

The Section has increased maximum Student Paper Awards from \$400 in 1990 to \$1,000 per meeting since 1999. This year the North-Central Section contributed \$1,000, and the South-Central Section \$500, for Student Paper Awards for papers given at the joint meeting in Lawrence, Kansas.

During 2006-2007, expenditures for student support programs were \$12,253. This was a bit less than 90% of all expenditures (exclusive of meeting costs) of the section. Student Travel Grants to meetings were cost shared with the GSA Foundation. In 2007-2008, the Section will continue these student programs.

The Board made an initial pledge and payment of \$2,000 in 1996 to the NC Section Endowment Fund of the GSA Foundation (this Fund was referred to as the Second Century Fund in the previous NC report to Council) with funds taken from the Section treasury, and further donations of \$2,000 per year since then, if our finances allowed a donation. The Board also approved that a continuing annual contribution to the Foundation would be considered at each Board meeting after review of the budget and financial status of the Section. The funds from this section endowment fund are intended for use in supplying travel grants. Because of the need to increase the financial stability of the section, payments were not made over a number of years. However, \$2,000 was contributed in September of 2005, and, because of the increase in financial stability of the section following the financial success of recent meetings, \$5,000 was contributed in July of 2006, and \$10,000 was contributed in July of 2007. Because of these contributions and matches provided by the Foundation, the North-Central Section funds in the Foundation total approximately \$47,000.

Scientific Meetings Program:

2006: The 40th Annual Meeting was held on 20-21 April 2006 in Akron, Ohio, hosted by the Department of Geology and the Office for Terrestrial Records of Environmental Change of the University of Akron, in conjunction with the Ohio Geological Survey and the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Approximately 340 papers (224 talks, 115 posters, plus 1 keynote lecture) were presented. Seven field trips were held, with 91 paid field-trip attendees. Meeting attendance was 546.

2007: The 41st Annual Meeting was held jointly with the South-Central Section in Lawrence, Kansas, hosted by the University of Kansas and the Kansas Geological Survey. Approximately 330 papers (196 talks, 135 posters) were presented. Seven field trips were planned and four field trips were held. Three of the originally planned trips were cancelled, mainly due to weather (one site was under water) and illness. A total of 78 people were originally signed up for field trips. There was one short course with nine paid attendees. Total meeting attendance was 517.

Professional Development/Awards/Membership and Employment Services:

The Section's primary Awards and Professional Development Programs are targeted to increase student involvement. Student attendance at Section meetings continues to be substantial, averaging 30% to more than 40% the last few years.

The Section continued funding for student travel grants and awards of approximately \$12,250 in 2006-2007 (cost shared with GSA Foundation which provided \$4,500). Approximately \$5,000 (including cost-share) was allocated for the Section's Student Travel Grant Program for the Annual Meeting and a similar amount for Section Meeting. In 2007, the Section provided \$1,000 for 7 Outstanding Student Paper/Poster awards at the combined South-Central/North-Central Meeting. Also, the Section has a Research Grants Program for undergraduate student members (see below).

The Section has solicited exhibitors from the private sector. Roy Shlemon Mentors Programs and John Mann Mentors in Applied Hydrogeology Programs were held in 2006 and 2007 for students. These programs were provided through GSA headquarters. GSA Campus Representatives from the Section met for discussion of GSA business.

Research Grants Program:

The Section initiated a competitive Research Grants Program for undergraduate student members in 1993. Grant application forms and procedures were developed and have been refined over time. The maximum amount of an individual grant is limited to \$300. In the 2006-2007 fiscal year, eight grants were awarded for a total of \$2,050.

GeoScience Education:

The Section initiated special GeoScience Education sessions at its 1990 meeting. These have now become a standard part of meeting planning. Some costs are generally underwritten by the Section, with reduced or nominal registration for all K-12 teachers. A member of the GSA GeoScience Education Committee is included as an ex-officio member of the Management Board. The success and level of effort of these programs are dependent upon the local committee.

Applied and Environmental GeoScience Programs:

The Section continues to pursue greater involvement from professionals in the private sector in environmental geology, engineering geology/geotechnical engineering, and hydrogeological consulting. The Section initiated this with a highly successful effort at the 1991 meeting. Special sessions for, and by, consultants have been encouraged for all meetings. The 2007 meeting included a number of sessions with a focus on applied geology. These included: "Applied Hydrogeology and Geophysics: Innovative Approaches to Old Challenges," and "Geologic Hazards in Urban Areas and Transportation Corridors of the Midcontinent."

With such involvement, private firms have also provided various donations to support the meetings and some consulting/applied firms or agencies are repeat exhibitors.

Publications Program:

The Section continues to produce and market its Field Trip Guides to a broader audience than meeting participants. The geological guidebook for the 2005 Minneapolis meeting was published and is available from the Minnesota Geological Survey; two guidebooks published specifically for the 2006 Akron meeting are available from the Ohio Geological Survey. One of the guidebooks for the Lawrence meeting is intended to be published as a Kansas Geological Survey open-file report.

Cooperation with Other Professional Societies:

The Section continues to foster cooperation with other societies by providing opportunities for joint meetings and sponsorships. Societies sponsoring sessions, and/or having programs, breakfasts, or luncheons at the Section Meeting in 2007 included: the Pander Society, the Paleontological Society, the Great Lakes Section of the Society for Sedimentary Geology, the Central Section of NAGT, and the Association for Women Geoscientists.

Long-Range Planning and Coordination:

As a result of its long-range planning the Section has continued to review and implement better marketing strategies for its meeting and activities; has tried to increase attendance at its meetings, has stabilized financially, and has continued to support several student programs. The meeting schedule is:

2008: University of Southern Indiana, Evansville, Indiana

2009: pending

2010: Northern Illinois University, Rockford, Illinois

The section responded to one of the major suggestions made in the Ad Hoc Committee on Sections Report of March 2005 by setting up a new section ad-hoc-committee. The charge of the committee, as approved by the Management Board of the North-Central Section on 11 April of 2006 was to: "advise and aid the local committee in organizing the scientific and technical sessions to be held at the section meeting." This committee, called the Program Advisory Board, met on 13 April 2007 at the meeting in Lawrence.

Members of the Kansas local committee also met with future North-Central Section meeting organizers on the evening of the last day of the Akron meeting.

Members of the Lawrence local committee produced a Report on Judging of Student Presentations and other reports are pending.

North-Central Section Website:

Duane Mohlman, at the Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division (CSD), has continued to be the webmaster of the North-Central Section Website. Thanks are due to him and the Nebraska Geological Survey. Our website has been up and running at the CSD website for several years. The site is at: <http://ncgsa.unl.edu/>.

Respectfully submitted,
Joseph Hannibal
Executive Secretary, North-Central Section