

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

**Report to Council; September 2009**

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 over 600 (this includes joint-meeting attendance figures) and because of this, and the fiscal prudence of local committees, revenues from meetings usually have increased. A joint meeting with the South-Central Section in Lawrence, Kansas, in 2007 had 517 registrants. The 2008 section meeting in Evansville, Indiana, had 578 registrants. A 2009 meeting in Rockford, Illinois, had 608 registrants, the largest number of attendees since 2005.

A joint 2010 meeting with the South-Central Section in Branson, Missouri, a joint 2011 meeting with the Northeast Section in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a 2012 meeting in Dayton, Ohio, and a 2013 meeting in Kalamazoo, Michigan, are confirmed. A tentative 2015 meeting is planned for Madison, Wisconsin, and discussions are underway for a 2014 meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The excellent financial state of the Section over the last decade has allowed the Section to dedicate most of its fiscal resources to support student programs, and to build the North-Central Section Endowment in the GSA Foundation. The Section had a 2007-2008 fiscal-year-end balance of \$123,699. The Section had a 2008-2009 fiscal-year-end balance of \$109,270. This is a decrease of \$14,429 from the 2007-2008 fiscal year. The decrease is due mainly to funds that were transferred into the GSA Foundation in January of 2009.

The financial security of the section remains in good shape due to the fiscal prudence of the local committee running the Section meeting in Rockford and in-kind contributions in support of that meeting from Northern Illinois University. With only three exceptions, the end-of-year balances of the Section have been increasing since December 2000, with two of the exceptions being due to transfer of funds into the Section endowment fund. The balance at the end of the 2008-2009 fiscal year 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. Support for student programs comprise the majority of all expenditures (exclusive of meeting costs) of the section.

For perspective, the dues income for the Section is typically near the general operating costs of the Section, hence, to support other programs, the Section must continue to ensure income from

the Scientific Meetings Program. The Section has allocated up to \$10,100 in section funds (mostly funds generated by Section meetings) to be used for student travel, student paper awards, and undergraduate research grants for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. Portions of this are matched by the GSA Foundation, so the amount given to students is even greater.

### **Section Endowment**

The section has substantially increased its endowment over the years. The Board made an initial pledge and payment of \$2,000 in 1996 to the North-Central Section Endowment Fund of the GSA Foundation (this Fund was referred to as the Second Century Fund in most previous N-C reports 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 have been intended for student support. Because of the need to increase the financial stability of the section, payments were not made over a number of years, and the amount of funds in the endowment remained very low. 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 at the end of June, 2008, totaled \$46,814. The Management Board of the Section approved a contribution of up to \$20,000 in fiscal year 2008-2009. Thus \$20,000 was put into the endowment in January 2009, as was \$5,000 in matching foundation support from the foundation. The downturn in the stock market, however, resulted in a major loss in early 2009. Despite the \$25,000 added to the account, on February 28, 2009 the endowment was \$53,040. Conditions improved somewhat later in 2009, however, and by the end of the 2008-2009 fiscal year the endowment was at \$63,997, and at the end of July, 2009 it had risen to \$68,006. Because of the state of the Section's finances, the Management Board approved a contribution of up to \$20,000 to the GSA Foundation in fiscal year 2009-2010 if the outlook for the stock market improved and if funds were available (that depended on the success of the meeting).

### **Scientific Meetings Program:**

**2009:** The 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting was held on 2-3 April, 2009, hosted by Northern Illinois University. The conference was held at the Northern Illinois University Rockford Campus. Meeting attendance was 608. Approximately 337 papers (220 talks, 117 posters) were presented. There was also a keynote address by John Valley and a special evening reception at the Burpee Museum of Natural History. Four field trips were originally planned and three field trips were held (one was cancelled because of a scheduling conflict with a trip leader) and a total of 62 people registered for these field trips. Five short courses were planned, but three were cancelled due to low enrollment. Two short courses held had a total of 15 attendees.

**2008:** The 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting was held on 24-25 April, 2008 in Evansville, Indiana, hosted by the Geology and Physics Department of the University of Southern Indiana, with the support of a number of sponsoring organizations and businesses. Meeting attendance was 578. Approximately 336 papers (209 talks, 127 posters), were presented. There was also a keynote address by Bill DiMichele. Eleven field trips were planned and seven field trips were held. Four of the originally planned trips were cancelled due to low numbers. Field-trip registration was 124.

The poster for the Evansville meeting contained a map of Indiana with a series of nested circles emanating from Evansville. This turned out to be prescient and appropriate as Evansville was the closest large city to the epicenter of a series of moderate- to small-sized earthquakes that occurred just before, and yes, during, the conference.

### **Professional Development/Awards/Membership and Student Involvement:**

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% during the last few years. Student attendance at the 2007 meeting in Evansville was 32% (187 out of 587 attendees). Student attendance at the 2008 meeting Rockford was 46% (283 out of 608 attendees; excluding student assistants).

The Section's travel-grant support aids in student attendance. Up to \$6000 from North-Central Section operating funds has been allocated for the 2007-2008, 2008-2009, and 2009-2010 fiscal years for student travel to the GSA Annual meeting and to the Section meeting.

The Section has increased maximum Student Paper Awards from \$400 in 1990 to \$2000 at present. In the 2007-2008 fiscal year, the Section provided a record of about \$3,150 for Student Paper/Poster awards at the meeting in Evansville. This was far beyond the previous year's \$1000, and was due to the extraordinary fundraising of the Evansville meeting organizers and the generous donors that they recruited. In the 2008-2009 fiscal year \$2,000 was allocated for awards.

Roy Shlemon Mentors Programs and John Mann Mentors in Applied Hydrogeology Programs were held in 2007 and 2008 for students. These programs were provided through GSA headquarters.

GSA Campus Representatives from the Section met with the Technical Program Advisory Board both years 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 2007-2008 fiscal

year, eight grants were awarded for a total of \$2,050. In the 2008-2009 fiscal year, eight grants were awarded for a total of \$2,100.

### **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 2008 meeting included a number of sessions of relevance to applied geology. These included a specific applied geology session on environmental, hydrogeological, and geotechnical geology.

With such involvement private firms have sometimes provided donations to support meetings and some consulting/applied firms or agencies have been 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 has been published as Kansas Geological Survey Open-File Report 2008-2. The field-trip guidebook for the 2008 meeting, *From the Cincinnati Arch to the Illinois Basin: Geological Excursions along the Ohio River Valley*, was published as Geological Society of America Field Guide 12. A GSA-published guidebook is planned for the 2010 Branson meeting.

### **Cooperation with Other Professional Societies:**

The Section continues to foster cooperation with other societies by providing opportunities for joint meetings and sponsorship opportunities. Societies sponsoring sessions, and/or having programs, breakfast, or luncheons at the Section meeting in 2008 included: the Pander Society, the Paleontological Society, the Great Lakes Section of the Society for Sedimentary Geology; the Central Section of NAGT, and the Council on Undergraduate Research.

### **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 confirmed meeting schedule is:

- 2010: Branson, Missouri (joint with the South-Central Section)
- 2011: Pittsburgh (joint with the Northeast Section)
- 2012: Dayton, Ohio
- 2013: Kalamazoo, Michigan
- 2014: Lincoln, Nebraska (under discussion)
- 2015: Madison, Wisconsin (tentative)

As preparation for these meetings, three section meeting organizers attended a training session in Boulder in August, 2008. Two were supported using Section funds. The North-Central Section Program Advisory Board met at the 2009 meeting in Rockville to discuss aspects of the technical program.

Enthusiastic members of the Branson local committee manned a promotional booth for the Branson meeting at the meeting in Rockville. Such booths have become standard at North-Central Section meetings. Section representatives also promoted the then-upcoming Rockford Section meeting at the Section booth at the GSA Annual meeting in Houston.

**North-Central Section Website:**

The section website is being rebuilt, albeit slowly, as part of the main Geological Society of America site. (It was on the Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division site.)

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Hannibal  
Executive Secretary, North-Central Section