

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

Report to Council; October 2010

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 574 registrants. A 2009 meeting in Rockford, Illinois, had 608 registrants, the largest number of attendees since 2005. The 2010 joint meeting with the South-Central Section in Branson, Missouri had 828 registrants.

A joint 2011 meeting with the Northeastern Section in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a 2012 meeting in Dayton, Ohio, a 2013 meeting in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and a 2015 meeting in Madison, Wisconsin, are confirmed.

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 was due mainly to funds that were transferred into the GSA Foundation in January of 2009. The Section had a 2009-2010 fiscal-year-end balance of \$101,377. Again, that decrease was due mainly to \$20,000 in funds that were transferred into the GSA Foundation during the fiscal year.

The financial security of the Section remains in good shape due to the fiscal prudence of the committee running the joint meeting in Branson. Despite the reduction in the end-of-fiscal-year balances over the last few years, the balance at the end of the 2009-2010 fiscal year 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 2010-2011 fiscal year. Portions of this will be matched by the GSA Foundation, so the amount given to students will be 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. At the end of May of 2010, with a fiscal-year contribution of \$20,000, plus a \$5,000 match from the Foundation, the North-Central Endowment was at \$100,536. However, with a fluctuating stock market, at the end of June, 2010 (the end of the 2009-2010 fiscal year), the endowment was down to \$98,292. Because of the excellent state of the Section's finances, in April of 2010 the Management Board approved a contribution of up to \$20,000 to the GSA Foundation in fiscal year 2010-2011 if the outlook for the stock market improved and if funds were available (that depended on the success of the Branson meeting).

Scientific Meetings Program:

2010: The 44th Annual Meeting, a meeting held jointly with the South-Central Section, was held on 11-13 April, 2010, co-hosted by the Department of Geography, Geology, and Planning of Missouri State University and the Department of Earth Science of Emporia State University. The conference was held at the new Branson Convention Center. Meeting attendance was 828. Approximately 442 papers (271 talks, 171 posters) were presented. Appropriate to the Branson venue, there was live music at the welcoming reception on Sunday and at the Happy Hour Reception on Monday evening. Eleven field

trips were originally planned of which ten field trips were held. A total of 155 people registered for these field trips. Six short courses were planned and all of the short courses were held.

The conference in Branson utilized an innovative schedule with talks beginning on Sunday at 1:00 pm and ending on Tuesday at 12:00. This schedule also allowed for half-day pre- and post-conference field trips in addition to the usual longer trips. Evaluation of the conference showed that this schedule was well received by the attendees.

2009: The 43rd 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.

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, greater than 40% in the last few years. Student attendance at the 2009 meeting in Rockford was 46% (283 out of 608 attendees; excluding student assistants). At the 2010 meeting in Branson student attendance was 43% (356 out of 828 attendees; excluding student assistants).

The Section's travel-grant support aids in student attendance. Up to \$6,000 from North-Central Section operating funds have been allocated for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 fiscal years for student travel to the GSA Annual meetings and to the Section meetings. The amounts given to students were or will be increased from these amounts by matches from the GSA Foundation.

The Section has increased maximum Student Paper Awards from \$400 in 1990 to \$2,000 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 \$1,000, and was due to the extraordinary fundraising of the Evansville meeting organizers and the generous donors that they recruited. In 2009-2010 fiscal year, and in the upcoming 2010-2011 fiscal year, \$2,000 was allocated for awards.

The Roy J. Shlemon Mentor Program in Applied Geoscience and the John Mann Mentors in Applied Hydrogeology Program were held in 2009 and 2010 for students. These programs were provided through GSA headquarters.

GSA Campus Representatives from the Section met with the Technical Program Advisory Board both in 2009 and 2010 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. In the 2009-2010 fiscal year, 11 grants were awarded for a total of \$2,100 but one grant had to be rescinded resulting in 10 awards.

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. This year's meeting included two sessions that specifically targeted K-16 geoscience educators.

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 2010 Branson meeting included a number of sessions of relevance to applied geology. These included an applied geology session on engineering, environmental, geotechnical, and hydrogeology, and a session on sequence stratigraphy, paleontology, and hydrocarbon potential of the Devonian and Mississippian strata of midcontinent North America.

With such involvement private firms have sometimes provided donations to support meetings and some consulting/applied geology 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 Field Excursions along the Ohio River Valley*, was published as Geological Society of America Field Guide 12. The field-trip guidebook for the 2010 meeting, *From Precambrian Rift Volcanoes to the Mississippian Shelf Margin: Geological Field*

Excursions in the Ozark Mountains, was published as Geological Society of America Field Guide 17.

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, breakfasts, or luncheons at the Section meeting in 2010 included: the Pander Society, the North-Central Section of 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 meetings 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:

- 2011: Pittsburgh (joint with the Northeastern Section)
- 2012: Dayton, Ohio
- 2013: Kalamazoo, Michigan
- 2014: open
- 2015: Madison, Wisconsin

As preparation for these meetings, three North-Central Section meeting organizers attended a training session in Boulder in May, 2010. Two were supported using Section funds. The North-Central Section Program Advisory Board met at the 2010 meeting in Branson to discuss aspects of the technical program.

There was a promotional booth for the Pittsburgh meeting at the meeting in Branson. Such booths have become standard at North-Central Section meetings. Section representatives also promoted the then-upcoming Branson meeting at the Section exhibit area at the GSA Annual Meeting in Portland.

North-Central Section Website:

The Section website is being rebuilt, albeit slowly, as part of the main Geological Society of America site.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Hannibal
Executive Secretary, North-Central Section