

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

Report to Council; September 2011

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. In 2011 the joint meeting with the Northeastern Section in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, had 1,603 registrants (including 645 professional-member meeting registrations and 848 student registrants, as well as various smaller categories).

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 Section had a 2010-2011 fiscal-year-end balance of \$101,988.

The financial security of the Section remains in good shape due to the fiscal prudence of the committee running the joint meeting in Pittsburgh. The balance at the end of the 2010-2011 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, and 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 older North-Central reports to Council) with funds taken from the Section treasury. 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, 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. But with contributions and an improvement in the stock market the ending balance of the North-Central Endowment as of the end of June, 2011, was \$138,312. Because of the excellent state of the Section's finances, in March of 2011 the Management Board approved a contribution of up to \$20,000 to the GSA Foundation in fiscal year 2011-2012 and \$7,000 was transferred to the endowment in September of 2011. That was matched by \$5,000 from the Foundation.

Scientific Meetings Program:

2011: The 45th Annual Meeting, a joint meeting with the Northeastern Section, was held on 20-22 March, 2011. The chairs were members of the faculties of Slippery Rock University and Kent State University. The conference venue was the Omni William Penn Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh. Meeting attendance was 1603 (including all categories of attendees). Approximately 737 papers were presented (377 talks and 360 posters).

Special events included an opening reception and a banquet with two speakers (a banquet is a tradition in the Northeastern Section but not the North-Central Section and attendance reflected these different traditions). Eleven field trips were originally planned and seven were run (two of the cancelled trips were post-meeting, and the post-meeting trip that did run had a small attendance). Seven workshops were originally planned and three were held. The meeting was notable for the large number of students and for the large number of talks relating to the Devonian.

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.

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). In 2011 the student attendance at the joint meeting in Pittsburgh was very large (50%, 795 excluding student assistants; or 53%, 848 out of 1,603 attendees, including 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 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 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. For the upcoming 2011-2012 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 2010 and 2011 for students. These programs were provided through GSA headquarters.

GSA Campus Representatives from the Section met with the Technical Program Advisory Board both in 2010 and 2011 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. Eleven grants were again awarded in the 2010-2011 fiscal year, 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. This year's meeting included several sessions related to K-16 geoscience education.

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 2011 Pittsburgh meeting included a number of sessions of relevance to applied geology. These included the sessions: Innovative data management and visualization in applied geology and other applied topics; Engineering geology/slope stability/mine subsidence; Marcellus – exploration and production; Marcellus – production and disposal of produced water; and Applied geology: environmental, engineering and hydrogeologic applications.

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. Three guidebooks prepared for the 2006

Akron meeting are available from the Ohio Geological Survey; two of these were published in 2006 and the third, on the geologic setting and processes along Lake Erie, was published in 2010. One of the guidebooks for the 2007 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. The guidebook for the 2011 meeting was published as *From the Shield to the Sea: Geological Field Trips from the 2011 Joint Meeting of the GSA Northeastern and North-Central Sections* (Geological Society of America Field Guide 20).

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 2011 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, the Council on Undergraduate Research, and the Northern Ohio Geological Society.

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:

- 2012: Dayton, Ohio
- 2013: Kalamazoo, Michigan
- 2014: open
- 2015: Madison, Wisconsin

As preparation for these meetings, two North-Central Section meeting organizers attended a training session in Boulder in May 2011. One attendee was supported using Section funds. The North-Central Section Planning and Technical Program Advisory Board met at the 2011 meeting in Pittsburgh to discuss aspects of the technical program.

There was a promotional booth for the Dayton meeting at the meeting in Pittsburgh. Such booths have become standard at North-Central Section meetings. Section representatives also promoted the then-upcoming Pittsburgh meeting at the Section exhibit area at the GSA Annual Meeting in Denver in 2010.

North-Central Section Website:

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

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Hannibal
Executive Secretary, North-Central Section