



**2012 ANNUAL MEETING
FINAL REPORT**

**NORTHEASTERN DISTRICT
ANNUAL MEETING
HOSTED BY THE
NEW YORK UPSTATE SECTION**

MAY 23-25, 2012

Prepared by:

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Meeting Co-Chairs**

Prepared for:

**NORTHEASTERN DISTRICT BOARD MEETING
Thursday, September 20, 2012
at
Milleridge Inn, Jericho, Long Island, NY**

NEW YORK UPSTATE SECTION
NORTHEAST DISTRICT
ANNUAL MEETING
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2012 Northeast District Annual Meeting

Final Report Memorandum

Overview: While the Northeastern District Meeting is more about the agenda and the people who attend the meeting, experience tells us that a great destination helps the attendance – that is why we selected The Crowne Plaza Resort in Lake Placid, NY, a world wide destination. Similar to other Sections – we try to rotate the location of the meeting geographically throughout the Section – this was, if not the first time, the first time in recent history that we held the meeting in the Adirondacks, which generated some enthusiasm among Upstate members and those members became the core to the Local Arrangements Committee (LAC). This was important because with a remote location like this – the committee needed to be passionate about the location for it to succeed.

The timing of this meeting was set to avoid a conflict with the Intermountain Section Meeting in Jackson, WY, which was anticipated for the week before. We were also constrained to the proposed week because of the availability of facilities within our target range of dates. The week selected led into the Memorial Day weekend, which was an initial concern, but given the good representation from the ITE Leadership, it appeared to not be an issue. In fact, many attendees took advantage of the timing to spend a long weekend in the Adirondacks, an extremely popular vacation area for hikers, bikers and nature enthusiasts.



Local Arrangements Committee

We did have one known conflict – The NYSATE Annual Meeting was held May 21-24 in Syracuse, NY. We would advise to avoid conflicts with this meeting in the future, as we had several members miss our meeting to attend that one.

A remote location like this was a challenge to plan and required some key elements to succeed, given the extra travel distance and commitment necessary to attend. These elements included field trips to the site to work our logistics, an enticing technical program, and the addition of some unique opportunities. For our meeting, these opportunities included a bike tour of the Olympic Scenic Byway and Ironman Competition road course, site-seeing at historic Olympic facilities, and the availability of an amazing array of outdoor recreational facilities. We were fortunate that our members trusted the District and LAC and were willing to make the commitment to attend.

In summary, the meeting was a success!!! It met the goals and objectives set by the LAC and District Board and it was financially self-sustained. We had solid attendance, great participation from all the Sections in the technical sessions, professional development credits for engineers, good food, and opportunities to catch-up with old friends and meet some new people in our profession.

Local Arrangements Committee

The success of any District meeting relies on a committed LAC, and this year was no exception. The key is a committee that contains both veterans, that have been through the process before and are able to provide valuable input to the committee throughout the process, and rookies, to bring fresh enthusiasm and to carry the torch on to future meetings. This year we had several returning members from 2009 and 2006 - Mike Wieszchowski, Don Adams, Shelly Johnston, Steve Gayle, Christina Douglas, and Mary Rowlands. The others, as listed below, brought energy and new ideas to the committee to help keep the meeting fresh.

LAC Members:

Meeting Co-Chairs:

Technical:

Venue:

Finance:

Social:

Registration:

Publicity:

Delegate/Speaker/LAC/Save the Date Gifts:

Consultant Support:

Industry:

Bike Tour:

Golf:

Traffic Bowl:

Don Adams/Mike Wieszchowski

Paul Pfleuger / Tim Trabold

Mike Wieszchowski

Mike Wieszchowski

Don Adams

Christina Douglas / Sarah Bowman

Carl Ast

Mary Rowlands

Shelly Johnston

Meaghan Capuano

Jeff Lebsack

Mark Sargent

Steve Gayle

Venue

The Crowne Plaza Resort and Golf Club in Lake Placid was very accommodating and reasonably priced – May is considered off season in the Adirondack’s so that helped with the prices. The staff was very helpful in planning, setup, and during the meeting. The resort provided us with a meeting planner about 6 months before the meeting, and she was able to smoothly guide us through all the site requirements.

Lodging

The Crowne Plaza

Even though some construction was being done, no complaints were received about the accommodations. With 245 rooms, the Crowne Plaza offered plenty of amenities and featured the stunning views of Mirror Lake and Whiteface Mountain that would be expected of a location in the heart of the world-famous Olympic Village. Being associated with the top-notch facilities of the Olympic Sports Complex, the only award-winning 45-hole golf club in the Adirondacks and the scenic splendor of year-round outdoor activities, it serves as a mecca for world-class athletes and nature enthusiasts alike. Within walking distance you can experience a quiet lake-side morning with the haunting call of loons, and it is but a short drive to some of the most scenic hikes in the Northeast.

Finances

Several scenarios of attendance and schedules were discussed and reviewed, but based on past experience, we set the budget expecting the meeting to draw attendance similar to the Cooperstown and Saratoga Springs meetings, which it did for full-time registrants, but because of its remoteness, the single day attendees were down considerably. The registration fees used in our budget were based on the fees at the last couple annual meeting. For this meeting, the costs were similar to other meetings, and we relied on corporate sponsors to help make this meeting a financial success.

A summary of the meeting budget and actual expenses is shown below:

2012 District Meeting Expense Summary		
Expense Category	2012 Estimated ⁽¹⁾	2012 Actual
Meeting Room Fee	\$4,500	\$4,750
Save the Date Promotion	\$462	\$0
Brochure Printing/Save the Date Card	\$2,000	\$897
Registration Fees (PayPal/Website)	\$807	\$825
PIE/PDH Approval	\$675	\$75
Gifts for Delegates	\$3,200	\$3,003
LAC Shirts	\$600	\$696
Speaker/Moderator Gifts	\$875	\$735
Companion Program	\$200	\$214
Table Top Fee for Vendors	\$0	\$0
Candidates Gratis	\$589	\$258
Professional Development Workshop	\$1,250	\$0
Golf Outing	\$0	\$988
Bicycle Tour	\$600	\$1,158
Audio Visual	\$1,500	\$1,000
Food & Beverage	\$32,575	\$24,625
Entertainment	\$500	\$0
Miscellaneous Expense (Traffic Bowl, etc.)	\$500	\$1,064
Total	\$50,833	\$40,288

2012 District Meeting Income Summary		
Income Category	2012 Estimated ⁽¹⁾	2012 Actual
Registration Income	\$29,375	\$29,825
Professional Development Workshop	\$1,250	\$720
Bicycle Tour	\$300	\$595
Golf Outing	\$0	\$800
Companion Program	\$200	\$160
Vendors Support	\$6,750	\$5,850
Consultant Support	\$12,500	\$12,250
Total	\$50,375	\$50,200
Retained in Bank Account (to hold open)	-	\$62
Surplus Funds (Income - Expenses)	-\$458	\$9,850

⁽¹⁾ As of 2/9/12 when the registration fee pricing was locked in. The initial planning budget from last year showed a Surplus Income of -\$558.

In the end, the meeting final financials allow us to pay back the \$2,000 seed money to the Upstate NY Section, the \$3,500 seed money to the District, and provided surplus funds in the amount of \$9,850. A check in the amount of \$13,350 is being presented to the District at the September Board Meeting and a check for \$2,000 has already been sent to the NY Upstate Section to distribute these funds. As can be seen in the income and expense summaries above, the meeting generated a surplus

of approximately \$10,000 more than expected. This surplus can be attributed to a variety of factors, some of the more significant being those listed below:

- Purchase of “Save the Date” promotional items was unexpectedly donated by a consultant.
- Cost of technical session PDH certification was unexpectedly donated by a consultant.
- Utilization of email for “Save the Date” and Registration Packet transmittals saved on printing costs.
- Only one VP candidate gratis (for registration fee and hotel costs) required this year.
- Professional Development Workshop was provided at no cost. (Instead of utilizing a paid FHWA workshop).
- Audio/visual costs lower than expected as a result of equipment sharing.
- Motivational speaker used for entertainment donated his time.

However, the biggest contributor to the surplus was the food & beverage costs, which was nearly \$8,000 cheaper than expected. Contributors to this savings included:

- Conservative estimating using a “worst case scenario” where all meals for all projected attendees were included.
- Setting minimum meal number guarantees as low as allowable. For this meeting the Crowne Plaza would allow for a variation up to 5% over the guaranteed minimum, so we set our minimums for each meal based on 5% below expected numbers (not maximum numbers).
- Putting a mechanism in place to accurately track the number of meals consumed.

Technical

The request for abstracts had a solid response and allowed us to fill up the sessions with a good balance from all the Sections. We opted to not go with a theme this year which allowed for a wider variety in topics. We had nine sessions and possibility of 8 PDHs and a technical Traffic Signal Controller Training worth another 3 PDHs. The Technical Sessions included the following:

- Traffic Management for Hurricane Irene
- Special Event Traffic Management
- Ways to accelerate projects
- Bicycle Planning
- Parking
- Urban Expressways
- Traffic Signal Technologies
- Mileage Based Pricing
- ITS

We wanted to use FHWA for the training session but the cost were more than the meeting registration per person, so we pulled together a training session with volunteer experts from the Section.

We used a combination of equipment – we brought our own laptops but used the hotel’s projectors, which included support from the hotel staff – nice backup to have if you start having technical difficulties.

On Wednesday, the bike tour took advantage of a recently completed trailhead parking project to integrate some learning into a ride along the Olympic Scenic Highway, which earned participants one PDH each for the trip. This route also included part of the Lake Placid Ironman Bike Course

and participants got to hear from one of the Ironman organizers about the challenges of running a bike race on winding Adirondack roads with less than optimal visibility and shoulder conditions. To increase safety during the ride, each participant was equipped with a reflective vest, which they were able to keep for future use. While the 14 mile bike event was planned as a bike “ride out” (mostly downhill) with a shuttle back, many riders challenged themselves and made the uphill return trip back to the resort. The bike tour seems to have become a popular addition to the District meeting the last couple years, especially when PDHs can be offered. This year the tour exceeded the 22 person maximum that was set, and others were asking to join. These bike tour is a great way to combine exercise with a technical learning activity. However, with outdoor events you always run the risk of inclement weather causing problems. As such, we had a back-up plan in place to do a presentation about the route/project to allow participants to earn their PDH regardless.

Lesson Learned: Coordinating the technical sessions is a big responsibility – need to start early with key sessions, then reach out to Section Technical Committees and the District Committee Chair to fill in speakers from other sections. FHWA is expensive for training sessions.

Registration

The experienced Christina Douglas took on online registration using some lessons learned from the Upstate Section Annual Meeting last year. The cost was about \$800 between setting up the website and PayPal charges. Initial responses from the attendees was that it made registration easier for those who could take advantage of it and it simplified banking for the registration committee (funds can be transferred online between the PayPal and the checking account). All the registration correspondence was done online (save the date postcard, registration packets) so the money saved on postage and copies more than offset the website and PayPal fees.

2012 District Meeting Registration Summary	
Registration Class	Number
Full	92
Student	5
Day Registration	10
Technical	3
Vendors	13
Total Registered	123
Other Registrations	
Workshop	24
Technical/Bike Tour	23
Golf	24
Companion Outing	8

Lesson Learned: Online registration is here to stay in the Upstate Section.

Industry/Exhibits

This committee essentially coordinates with the vendors. Meaghan Capuano used the list from Port Jefferson as the starting point and then reached out to the local vendors. A special registration form was developed and sent to all prospective vendors. The vendor area at the meeting was co-located with the registration area and the break/breakfast area, which contributed to good interaction in the mornings and during the peak registration times. Wednesday and Thursday afternoons were quiet in the Vendor area. Wednesday afternoon golf and bike events combined with nice weather pulled people outside, and on Thursday afternoon the board meeting followed by the traffic bowl with a bar and nice weather resulted in very few visitors to the Vendor area during those times. The vendors that we spoke with were understanding but pointed out an opportunity to communicate the schedule better in the future. We had 13 vendors.

Lesson Learned: Engage vendor representatives early in the schedule development. They may choose to shorten their trip.

Consultant Support

Maximizing consultant support was key to keeping registration fees reasonably priced, and the persistence of Shelly Johnston was key to reaching our financial support goals. Shelly contacted her counterparts from the Portland and Port Jefferson Meetings to get a list of previous contributors and reached out to them and other local firms for sponsorship. While we tried to get commitments early, many sponsorships didn't arrive until attendees registered. Total consultant contributions were \$12,250. We offered 3 levels of sponsorship: Gold, Silver and Bronze. We had 6 gold, 2 silver, 11 bronze and one additional sponsor (less than Bronze). Each sponsorship level came with different levels of advertisement.

Lesson(s) Learned: Don't plan on early sponsors – set a goal and keep calling until you hit it.

Delegate-Speaker Gifts

Mary Rowlands has led this committee for the last two Upstate NY hosted District Meetings (Cooperstown and Saratoga Springs) and we welcomed her back this year as well. She does a great job of finding unique, useful gift within the budget allowed. This year we went with trunk organizers for the attendee gifts and an Adirondack Coffee Table book for the speaker gifts. In addition, Mary ordered envelope openers with the save the date logo that we handed out at preceding events – the save the date handouts seem to increase awareness of the meeting venue.

Lesson Learned: We had a couple technical sessions that brought extra speakers – it would have been nice to have a couple extra speaker gifts.

Publicity

This committee (Carl Ast and Shelly Johnston) was responsible for the publicity aspects associated with this meeting. Providing notices to the newsletter editors and website managers – everything from early announcements and save the dates to the registration packets.

The challenge for this committee every year is collecting all the information for the meeting brochures in time to go to print and have them back by the time we are stuffing the registration packets.



Golf Outing

Mark Sargent organized an outing on one of the Resort's outstanding courses for 24 golfers. The event was a nine-hole scramble Wednesday afternoon on the Lake Placid Club Mountain Course, which had a very scenic backdrop. This venue was a short drive or shuttle (less than one mile) from the hotel, which as we have learned in the past is always appreciated because of the tight schedule. We did book the golf and the bike tour at the same time, which may have lowered the number of golfers, but we did not want to take away from the technical sessions by scheduling the golf simultaneously, and we have tried Friday afternoon in the past and attendance was in the single digits.

Social/Venue/Companion Program

On Thursday morning while the technical sessions were underway, a tour for the Olympic Venues was planned for those who accompanied the attendees to the conference. The tour was a walk through Olympic history with Howard Riley, a local icon in the Lake Placid community. The tour included the facility where the USA hockey team defeated the USSR in 1980, the ski jumps and the Olympic Complex at Whiteface. As you can see from the photo to the right – 7 or the 8 registered family members took advantage of this unique experience.



Traffic Bowl

The Traffic Bowl was orchestrated by Steve Gayle, the great, with the assistance of a special guest the Maine Moose (Ken Petraglia). Each section fielded a team and after three competitive rounds the Met Section held off the home team to take the coveted traffic bowl bragging rights.

The event was well planned and the three teams were well prepared, but attendance was low. We speculate that the beautiful weather and abundance of recreational opportunities contributed to the poor attendance. There was a cash bar at this event, but it may be a good investment to offer an open bar and free hors d'oeuvre to lure attendees to this event in the future if competing with the possibility of outside activities.



Awards Banquet

The Section activities award was a close battle between the three Sections of the District, but the New England Section came out on top. Northeastern University was the surprise winner of the Student Chapter Award this year upsetting perennial favorite UMass Amherst, and the student paper award was won by Mike Plotnikov of the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The final award presented was the Harvey B. Boutwell Distinguished Service Award. The winner of this year's Boutwell Award was Don Adams, from the Upstate New York Section.



Mike Wieszchowski presented the Section Activities Award to Joe Balskus of the New England Section



Gary Hebert presented this year's Harvey Boutwell Award to Don Adams.



Paula Benway presented the Student Paper Award and a \$1,000 check to Mike Plotnikov of UMass-Amherst for his paper on evaluating the impacts of placing tolls on interstate highways.



Scenic views of Mirror Lake

