

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

## **Annual Report to Council; September, 2008**

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, the largest number of attendees since 2005. A 2009 meeting in Rockford, Illinois, a joint 2010 meeting with the South-Central Section in Branson, Missouri, and a joint 2011 meeting with the Northeast Section in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, are confirmed. Proposals for meetings in 2012 and beyond are being actively solicited.

The Section had a 2007-2008 fiscal-year-end balance of \$123,699. This balance is a \$12,433 increase over the 2006-2007 fiscal year. The increase is due to the fiscal prudence and fund-raising activities of the local committee running the section meeting in Evansville. With only two exceptions, the end-of-year balances of the Section have been increasing since December 2000, and one of the exceptions was due to transference of funds into the Section endowment fund. The balance at the end of the 2007-2008 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.

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. As the financial state of the Section has stabilized, the Board has dedicated its fiscal resources to support student programs and to other GSA strategic initiatives, including contributions to the GSA Foundation for a North-Central Section Endowment (restricted fund). Because of the excellent state of the Section's finances, the Management Board approved a contribution of up to \$20,000 to the GSA Foundation for this Endowment in fiscal year 2008-2009.

The Section has increased funding for Student Paper Awards from \$400 in 1990 to \$1000 per meeting since 1999. This year the North-Central Section contributed \$1000 for Student Paper Awards for papers given at the meeting in Evansville, but additional funds allowed resulted in about \$3000 in student awards being given out.

Student Travel Grants to meetings have been increased from \$0 in 1990 to \$9777 in the 2007-2008 fiscal year (cost shared with the GSA Foundation which provided \$4500). Travel grants to the meeting in Denver totaled \$4,650 and travel grants for the Evansville meeting were \$5,127.

In 1993, the Section initiated a Research Grants Program for undergraduate student members; eight research grants totaling \$2050 were awarded in the 2007-2008 fiscal year. Support for student programs comprised the majority of all expenditures (exclusive of meeting costs) of the section. In 2008-2009, the Section will continue these student programs, allowing increased amounts in some categories.

The Board made an initial pledge and payment of \$2000 in 1996 to the North-Central Section Endowment Fund (restricted fund) of the GSA Foundation (this Fund was referred to as the Second Century Fund in most previous North-Central reports to Council) with funds taken from the Section treasury, and further donations of \$2000 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 were initially 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, and the amount of funds in the endowment remained low. However, \$2000 was contributed in September of 2005, and, because of the increase in financial stability of the section following the financial success of recent meetings, \$5000 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 has approved a contribution of up to \$20,000 in fiscal year 2008-2009.

### **Scientific Meetings Program:**

**2007:** The 41st Annual Meeting was held jointly with the South-Central Section in Lawrence, Kansas, on 11-13 April, 2007, 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 due to weather (one site was under water) or illness. A total of 78 people were originally signed up for field trips. There was one short course with nine 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 attendance, however, 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 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 40% the last few years. Student attendance at the 2008 meeting in Evansville was 32% (187 out of 587 attendees).

In the 2007-2008 fiscal year, a record of about \$3000 was awarded for student papers/posters 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. This funding included \$1000 in regular Section funds, \$600 in Historic New Harmony Awards, \$600 in Indiana Water Resources Awards, and awards from the GSA Foundation.

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 for discussion of GSA business.

### **Research Grants Program:**

The Section initiated a competitive Research Grants Program for undergraduate student associates 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 \$2050.

### **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 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 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.

### **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, the GSA Engineering Geology Division, the GSA History of Geology Division, 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, has continued to support several student programs, and has substantially increased its endowment. The confirmed meeting schedule is:

- 2009: Northern Illinois University, Rockford, Illinois
- 2010: Branson, Missouri (joint with the South-Central Section)
- 2011: Pittsburgh (joint with the Northeast Section)

Locations for meetings for 2012 and beyond are being actively solicited.

As preparation for these meetings, five section representatives attended a training session in Boulder on 4 August, 2008. Three of these were supported using Section funds. Thus expenses to run the section will be somewhat higher than usual in the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

The North-Central Section Program Advisory Board met at the 2008 meeting in Evansville to discuss aspects of the technical program.

Members of the Evansville local committee also met with future North-Central Section meeting organizers on the evening of the last day of the Evansville meeting. This end-of-meeting get-together has become a standard part of our meeting.

The North-Central Section will be represented by two officers at the combined-section booth at the meeting at Houston.

**North-Central Section Website:**

The section website is being moved from the Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division to the Geological Society of America site.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Hannibal  
Executive Secretary, North-Central Section