



TEXAS BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS



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Chairman's Corner: GEOSCIENCE in the UNITED STATES

Twenty-eight states and Puerto Rico currently require professional registration or licensure of geoscientists, with several other states developing such programs. Thirteen states presently have their own versions of Geoscientist-In-Training programs, and if proposed legislation in the current 81st Texas legislature passes, Texas will become the fourteenth. Texas is already one of just eight states with continuing education requirements for license renewal. Where does Texas stand with regard to the rest of the country as it pertains to professional geoscience? In November 2008, representing TBPG at the annual national meeting of the Association of State Boards of Geology (ASBOG), I learned the answer to this question. Not surprisingly, we are right at the top.

As of 1 November 2008, Texas reported 6,483 licensed Professional Geoscientists (PGs), which include geologists, geophysicists and soil scientists. (Approximately 7,000 Texas PG licenses have actually been issued since the program began on 1 September 2001.) California comes in second with 5,267 PGs – geologists and geophysicists. Third is Washington with 3,750 licensed geologists, engineering geologists and hydrogeologists. Wyoming is fourth with 2,731 PGs and Pennsylvania rounds out the top five with 2,344 PGs. Next, Florida drops just under 2,000 with 1,977 PGs. The numbers fall off fairly quickly from there down to Maine with 253 PGs. Puerto Rico proudly weighs in with “~100” PGs.

Some additional states with occupational statutes include geology, surveying, engineering and architecture under a single license. A couple more states require licensing for environmental professionals, which includes geoscientists. All states that license geoscience separately use ASBOG's national exams (Fundamentals of Geology and Practice of Geology) for professional geology licensure. In Texas, for soil science we also use the exam prepared by the Council of Soil Science Examiners and for geophysics the Texas Geophysics exam, written in Texas by Texans. Several states are exploring using ASBOG's FG exam as an exit requirement for college seniors graduating in geology.

At the annual ASBOG meeting's general session, each state's representative gives an oral report about legislative and public outreach initiatives, professional development programs and the overall success of geoscientists in working with other professionals to serve the citizens of their respective state. With all due respect to our fellow PGs and boards in our sister states, it quickly became crystal clear to me that Texas is leading the entire country in promoting professionalism in geoscience and safeguarding the public trust. When I finished my lengthy oral report, I didn't know how to wrap up. So, I just finished the way I sometimes do. “God bless Texas! And all you good folks, too!”

New Board Officer

Congratulations to Barbara O. Roeling, P.G. who was recently nominated to serve as the Board's Vice-Chair and voted in at the December 5, 2008 Board meeting. Vice-Chair Roeling has been with the Board since March 2007. Y. Lynn Clark, P.G. and Glenn Lowenstein, P.G. retained their positions as Chairman and Secretary/Treasurer, respectively.

Interim Executive Director Hired at TBPG

On December 5, 2008, after receiving authorization from the Legislative Budget Board and the Office of the Governor, the Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists extended a formal offer of employment as Interim Executive Director to Mr. Charles Horton (pictured at right). Mr. Horton reported for duty on 1 January and will serve until Mr. Michael Hess returns from active military duty. When Mr. Hess returns, it is expected that he will resume his role as Executive Director and Mr. Horton will move into another role of responsibility within the agency.



*Charles Horton,
Interim Executive Director*

Mr. Horton is a native Texan from Houston. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin in 1982. He has served the state of Texas for over twenty-eight (28) years, including twenty (20) years with the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and eight (8) years in occupational licensing with the Health Professions Council and the Department of State Health Services (DSHS). Mr. Horton served as Executive Director for the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners and the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists with DSHS since September 2005.

Mr. Horton stated that he looks forward to working with the TBPG Board Members, agency staff, and the Board’s stakeholders. Mr. Horton embraces the mission of the TBPG, which is to “protect public health, safety, welfare and the state’s natural resources by ensuring that only qualified persons carry out the public practice of geoscience.”

Mr. Vincent Houston, who had served as Acting Executive Director since Mr. Hess was recalled to active duty, will resume his previous position as Chief Financial Officer for the Board.

New Renewal Rates for Licensees Over 65

At the Board meeting held on December 5, 2008, an amendment to Rule 851.80 was adopted reducing the fee for licensees over the age of 65. This fee will be equal to one-half the yearly renewal fee, and will be effective for those licenses that expire after March 1, 2009. As the current renewal fee is \$168, those who hold a license that expires after the effective date and have reached 65 years of age by the date of their license expiration will be eligible to pay a fee of \$84 to renew.

New Sealing Guidance Document

Written guidance has recently been developed regarding what geoscience documents prepared for the public require a geoscientist seal. The guidance originated out of concern expressed by Groundwater Conservation Districts in their efforts to ensure compliance with the TBPG rules. Although the guidance originated from their concerns, the document is general in nature and is intended to assist all areas of the geosciences in clarifying TBPG sealing requirements. The guidance document was developed based on information provided by Bill Mullican, P.G., Deputy Executive Administrator, Water Science and Conservation, Texas Water Development Board; Gregory Ellis, Executive Director, Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts; Ronald Fieseler, P.G., General Manager, Blanco Pedernales GCD; Jim Conkwright, Manager, High Plains UWCD #1; and David Jeffrey, P.G., Manager, Bandera County River Authority and Groundwater District. This guidance document is available on the Enforcement page of the TBPG website.

ASBOG® EXAM RESULTS

October 3, 2008:

Of the 61 candidates that took the Fundamentals of Geology portion, **29 (or 47.5%)** achieved a passing score. Of the 35 candidates that took the Practice of Geology portion, **27 (or 77.1%)** achieved a passing score.

National passing rate:

FG-57.9% PG-74.2%

Proposed Amendments and Adopted Rules

Two rule amendments were adopted at the December 5, 2008 Board meeting. The amendment to 22 TAC 851.32 was adopted to remove language that would require all courses and continuing education activities to be pre-approved. The amendment to 22 TAC 851.80 was adopted to reflect the reduction in renewal fees for those licensees who are 65 years of age or older (see front page for more information).

An amendment was proposed for 22 TAC 851.30 that would remove subsection (h) entirely, thereby no longer requiring that firms reapply for a new registration if it is expired for more than one year; firms would simply renew.

Rule changes are updated on the agency’s website as they are adopted. Proposed amendments and adoptions are posted to the Texas Register for public viewing and comment.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- Legislative session began - January 13
- ASBOG® administered-March 6, Austin, Texas; also CSSE registration deadline
- Board meeting– March 27, Austin, Texas
- CSSE administered—April 17 (see CSSE website for details)
- *Check the TBPG website for future committee meeting dates and agendas.*

Member Krenz-Doe Attends SSPEED Conference

As many in eastern Texas still suffer from the effects of Hurricane Ike, Board Member Kelly Krenz-Doe offers the following regarding the role the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) plays during such times of natural disaster and pre-disaster planning for the gulf coast: “FEMA implements the National Response Framework. The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, passed by Congress and signed by the President in October 2006, set forth a new expanded mission for FEMA. Under this new mission, FEMA is responsible for implementing a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation.

FEMA has worked to foster a culture of preparedness by building combined and comprehensive national capabilities that better protect the nation from the extraordinary natural and man-made threats. To do so, FEMA has been working with public and private sector partners to develop plans and programs that integrate national efforts to effectively address hazards. FEMA

has strengthened their regional offices, and designated Federal Preparedness Coordinators and operational planners to enhance planning capabilities at the federal, state, and local levels. Emergency management personnel use common emergency management standards, practices and procedures—such as those under the National Response Framework (NRF) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The pre-disaster planning for the Gulf Coast area emphasized the preparedness component of the NRF and the integration of public and private sector partners.”

This information was prepared for the SSPEED (Severe Storm Predication, Education and Evacuation from Disasters) Center’s Severe Storm Predication and Global Climate Impact in the Gulf Coast Conference that took place at Rice University in Houston, Texas on October 29-31, 2008.



TEXAS BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL GEOSCIENTISTS

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Table with 4 columns: Licensing, Enforcement, Finance, Administrative Support. Includes names and titles of staff members like Annita Herrera, Alberto J. Jimenez, P.G., Vincent R. Houston, etc.

The office of the Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists is located at 333 Guadalupe, Tower 1, Suite 460A, Austin, Texas, 78701 and is open Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm.

The mission of the Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists is to protect public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring that only qualified persons carry out the public practice of geoscience.

Visit our website at www.tbpg.state.tx.us.

New Licensees

Amy Ewing, PG #10413, Albuquerque, NM
Stephen A. Smith, PG #10443, Tempe, AZ
Stacy H. Burgess, PG #10444, The Woodlands, TX
Brian L. Sulzberger, PG #10445, Littleton, CO
Dayne L. Frary, PG #10446, Bakersfield, CA
Errol P. Lawrence, PG #10447, Golden, CO
Marshall A. Lake, PG #10448, Columbia, IL
James E. Barrett, PG #10449, Chattanooga, TN
George M. Lukert, PG #10450, Boston, NY
Tao Fang, PG #10463, Baton Rouge, LA
Derek McGregor, PG #10464, Camas, WA
Beronica J. Lee-Brand, PG #10465, Cedar Park, TX
Anthony C. Rodriguez, PG #10466, Austin, TX
Brent C. Ferry, PG #10467, Austin, TX
Dustin L. Henderson, PG #10468, White Oak, TX
Shann M. King, PG #10469, LaFayette, LA
Roger B. Gomez, PG #10483, San Antonio, TX

Terry D. Andrews, PG #10484, Van, TX
James C. Griffith, PG #10485, Frankston, TX
Nancy L. Niemann, PG #10486, Houston, TX
Adrien L. Lindley, PG #10487, Austin, TX
Katherine S. Kaighin, PG #10488, Austin, TX
John L. Robertson, PG #10489, Houston, TX
Christopher S. McCaslin, PG #10490, Rockwall, TX
Phillip A. Amidar, PG #10491, Garland, TX
William F. Vienne, PG #10492, Austin, TX
James R. Davidson, PG #10493, Katy, TX
Michael A. Simms, PG #10494, Baton Rouge, LA
Kegan W. Boyer, PG #10495, Houston, TX
Manuel De La Fuente, PG #10496, Fort Worth, TX
Arne S. Gelfert, PG #10497, Arlington, TX
Anthony W. Gorody, PG #10498, Houston, TX
Gary D. Moore, PG #10499, Atlantic Beach, FL
Clifford K. Hillin, PG #10500, Lubbock, TX



In the interest of conservation and environmental consciousness, many of our licensees have elected to receive this newsletter by email and are reading it right this minute! Be one of the first to know; submit your current email address to webmaster@tbpg.state.tx.us for future newsletters, updates and information.

It's a green idea...it's a GREAT idea!