



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL ESTIMATORS

# ESTIMATING TODAY

November 2006

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## McCarthy Building Companies Prepares Conceptual Estimates for Major Healthcare Project



*St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise, Idaho  
See full article in the Project Profile section of this issue.*



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# ESTIMATING TODAY

## November 2006

### Contents

ASPE Corner	3
ASPE Society News	4
ASPE Phoenix Chapter Raises Funds for ASU at Golf Tournament	
Meet ASPE's First Vice President Frank Kutilek	
Meet ASPE's Newest Members	
Direct from the Executive Director	6
McCarthy Builders Uses Historical Database to Develop Estimate for Large Healthcare Project	8
Analyzing 'Market Conditions Cost' As A Variable To The Pre-Construction Estimate	10
Estimator/Project Manager -- One Role or Two?	12
Save Time with LEED On-Line	14
From the ASPE Membership Committee -- For a Rainy Day	16

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**By John B. Stewart, CPE  
ASPE President**

## ASPE Corner

### 2006/2007 Board of Trustees

The Board has approved Mr. Jerry Donohue of Golden Gate Chapter 2 as Member Emeritus.

### Website

Our ASPE website is going through some changes. We

will be looking for a new web master as well moving the website itself to a bigger and better server. A secure shopping cart has been added and other improvements are yet to come. I ask your patience while all this is happening. I will keep you up to date as we go through these changes and if you have any suggestions or see anything that may not be working right or may need improvement, don't hesitate to let me know.

### ENR Top Firm Leaders Forum

Executive Director Ed Walsh and I have been invited to attend the ENR Top Firm Leaders Forum in Arlington, VA on September 26, 2006. I will fill you in on the details in my next column.

### 'ASPE NEWS'

Ed Walsh has been working on putting out a monthly "ASPE NEWS" e-mail. The purpose of the e-mail is to give the chapters the latest information so that it can be into the hands of membership and hopefully be used in chapter newsletters.

The plan is send the e-mail out at first to the chapter presidents and when Ed gets the bugs worked out, eventually to all members. Of course there will be an "opt out" line that a member can choose if they wish not to receive the e-mail. As we get ASPE NEWS going please don't hesitate to contact Ed or myself with any suggestions or even some news you would like to pass along to our ASPE.

### Certification

The Certification Board has introduced an accelerated certification cycle, which in a nutshell, allows a candidate to start the certification process at anytime during the year instead of waiting for the regular cycles to come around. The Certification Board has been instructed to make this the only "cycle" available. I know it will take coordination with the SBO and some "phasing" in time but I believe it is very feasible and should be accomplished quickly.

In order to implement this quickly and to maintain our high standard of quality, several things have to happen. The SBO will need to turn the candidate's certification paper into a PDF and send it out to a CPE for review, and then the reviewing CPE will have to return the graded paper to the SBO in a timely manner. The processing and review of certification papers is of utmost importance to the candidate and the program. Any delay in reviewing the papers can delay the candidate from moving forward and completing the certification process on time. I ask all CPEs who are sent papers to take a few minutes out of their busy day to read and grade the paper and send the results back as quickly as possible.

I thank the Certification Board, chapter certification chairs, reviewing CPE's and of course the SBO staff for making our ASPE Certification Program the best in the industry.

In closing, I would like to wish all our members, staff and their families a very Happy Thanksgiving.

John Stewart, CPE  
ASPE President

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# ASPE Society News!

## ASPE Phoenix Chapter Raises Funds for ASU at Golf Tournament

ASPE's Phoenix Chapter 6 raised nearly \$8,000 for construction scholarships at its recent golf tournament. The annual fundraiser, held this year at the Orange Tree Golf Resort in Phoenix, raises funds for scholarships for students at the Del E. Webb School of Construction at Arizona State University.

Membership in the chapter has been holding steady at approximately 92, says Chapter President Joel Smith, CPE, president of Smith Specialty Builders, Phoenix. "Over the years, we've had from 80 to all the way up to 130 members," he says. Although membership levels have held steady over the past few years, the chapter is trying to reach out to potential new members with flyers and local advertising. "We're trying to get the message out that ASPE is a viable organization," Smith says.

Smith is serving his third term as chapter president. He previously served two terms. Alan Skinner, of Skinner Interior Systems, Phoenix, served as president in 2004-2005, and Smith was elected for the 2006-2007 term.

Upcoming dinner meeting topics include a presentation on air conditioning controls by Honeywell Technology. Representatives from the chapter attended the ASPE Western Regional meeting Oct. 21 in Denver. ●

## Meet ASPE's First Vice President Frank Kutilek

ASPE First Vice President Frank Kutilek, FCPE, LEED (r) AP, was enrolled in classes at a St. Louis college when he received a letter from Fruin-Colnon, the precursor of St. Louis-based Fru-Con, inviting him to consider working for the international contractor. Kutilek, who notes he was not particularly inspired about his course of study at the college, says he was intrigued. "They were looking for people to come work for them as quantity surveyors. I thought, 'well, why not?'"

Kutilek took a battery of aptitude tests at Fru-Con and was hired, along with 12 other people. The company then began training the new recruits in how to do quantity takeoff to prepare them for a career in estimating. Eight individuals remained with the company following the completion of the training program and were placed in different departments. Kutilek joined a newly created group called Central Estimating that prepared estimates for Fru-Con when other departments did not have the manpower or time to do so.

Although Kutilek remained with the company only a few years, most of the individuals who went through the training together stay in touch to this day and remain in the estimating field. "Occasionally, we still get together," he says.

After four years at Fru-Con, Kutilek went to work for Tarlton, a large St. Louis-based contractor. He stayed there for 10 ½ years. He then worked for several other St. Louis contractors before returning to Tarlton for another 8 ½ years. After working for a Cleveland-based contractor, Kutilek returned to St. Louis and worked for a several different general contractors, finally ending up at HOK, an architectural firm. As an architectural firm, "We do very little hard-bidding. All our

estimating is conceptual," he says. HOK is a leader in sustainable design and Frank became one of the first 100 to be LEED accredited four years ago.

Kutilek is a charter member of ASPE's St. Louis Chapter 19 and has held many offices over the years, including director on the chapter board. Nationally, he was a member and then chair of the Standards Board. He has served as ASPE's second vice president for two terms and was elected to serve as first vice president for 2006-2007. He was elected to the fellow committee and has been named an Estimator of the Year.

As First Vice President, Kutilek says he would like to see ASPE fully come into its own as national voice for estimating. "We are a well-kept secret," he says. "ASPE for me has done a lot. If I ever need some information in a certain geographic area, there's always someone to call."

Kutilek adds that ASPE should continue to find ways to find revenue through non-dues income. Some current revenue raisers include the Standards Manual, ASPE's online courses, the Certification program and the estimating academies. "We can't rely on membership dues alone to support the association," he says.

In addition to his ASPE membership, Kutilek is a member or affiliated with the Construction Specifications Institute; the U.S. Green Council LEED program; the Engineers Club in St. Louis, Mo.; and the Associated General Contractors of America. ●

## Meet ASPE's Newest Members

New Member	Chapter	Location	New Member	Chapter	Location
Steven Fraasch	2	Golden Gate			Moines
Norman Wendl	3	Orange County	Curtis Detmering	73	Greater Des Moines
John Krogman	4	San Diego	Pat Hamill	73	Greater Des Moines
Patrick Bodine	4	San Diego	Joyce Leslie	76	Central Pennsylvania
David Allen	5	Denver	Kent Gamble	90	MAL - Northwest Region
Douglas Brown	5	Denver	John Marion	90	MAL - Northwest Region
Sarha Gross	5	Denver	Shawn Gibson	91	MAL - Southwest Region
David Winner	5	Denver	Chris Brown	93	MAL - Southeast Region
Lisa Locascio	6	Arizona			
Terrence Roche	7	Chicago			
Todd Gutrie	10	New York			
Ken Kuivenhoven	11	Sacramento			
Scott Hyde	12	Reno			
Dustin Garcia	12	Reno			
Adina Raney	12	Reno			
John Graham	19	St. Louis Metro			
Shana Opdyke	21	Baltimore			
Keith Buchanan	23	Greater D C			
Amit Guleria	26	Garden State			
Richard Hyland	26	Garden State			
Santosh Salvi	26	Garden State			
Andres Pareja	26	Garden State			
Marc Tower	32	Heartland			
Chad Chapman	39	Viking			
Clint Sockman	49	Gold Coast			
Diane Espinoza	53	Old Pueblo			
Gary Jones	53	Old Pueblo			
Edward Hines	55	Santa Clara Valley			
Michael Lackey	57	San Antonio			
Eileen Basilone	60	Nutmeg			
Carl Anderson	66	Packerland			
Kevin Bredeson	66	Packerland			
Jeff Swanson	66	Packerland			
David Valdes	66	Packerland			
Brad O'Hara	73	Greater Des Moines			
Nicholas Gehl	73	Greater Des Moines			





**By Ed Walsh**  
**ASPE Executive Director**

## Direct from the Executive Director

Hello ASPE members:

Let me be one of the first to wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving, we really have much to be thankful for. Every day I get calls and e-mails from companies trying to find an estimator. It is nice to work in an "in demand" profession, isn't it? (It may be a great time to ask your boss to cover your dues

next year!)

The fall has been full of activity. We had several estimating academies including a national academy with AGC in Atlanta. I was able to attend the ASA leadership conference in Providence, RI and speak to the gathered chapter executive directors about ASPE. If your chapter does not currently have a relationship with ASA I strongly encourage you give your local chapter a call. We need to do more with this important industry partner.

I was able to attend the ENR Leadership conference in Arlington with our President John Stewart. I was particularly pleased John got to meet many of the real leaders of our industry who were in attendance. The focus of the conference was how best to deal with a shrinking workforce. John and I met with people from McGraw Hill and discussed possible new member benefits for ASPE members.

I was able to confirm that ASPE will once again have a booth at the 2007 ABC Convention in Nashville. Add that event to our other events with IEC, METALCON, Electric West and World of Concrete, and ASPE is getting seen by tens of thousands who would not know of us otherwise.

I was able to man our booth at the National Electrical Contractors Association convention in Boston. This was a brand-new event for us and I hope we generated some awareness of ASPE and maybe some new members. I believe we have found a new partner to help underwrite some electrical estimating academies if we can get them set up. In fact, several trade associations wish to partner with ASPE for specialty academies. Those who feel they are qualified to teach estimating skills in electrical, painting and heavy highway, let's talk.

Things are cooking in several new potential chapter areas. Anchorage, Seattle, Spokane and Charlotte are moving faster toward regular meetings.

The board of trustees is in Park City, UT, this month for our fall meeting and to see first-hand just how nice the facilities are for next summer's National Estimating Academy and Convention. I would suggest you all get online and check this place out. You are going to love Park City.

The membership roster will be finished soon and on its way to you. This year we had even more companies purchase advertising in the buyers guide section. I hope you will make it a point to patronize these folks and tell them thank you. It is their support which has helped the roster go from a major expense not so long ago to about break even this year.

Our employment center is still riding the wave of demand for good talented estimators. Any member can post a resume there, and employers are encouraged to check them out for free. We keep our rates to post an ad very low compared to the price most websites charge. Our website's finest new addition has to be the shopping cart. This allows us to take membership applications and do sales of our publications right on line in a secure place. The staff time this will save is incredible!

I am in the process of establishing a local estimating academy mentoring team of members who have helped set up local academies and know the ropes. If you think you'd be interested, please volunteer. No heavy lifting required: just some advice, feedback and consultation. Local estimating academies on whatever scale a chapter can muster are great. Whether you have one or two instructors or a one-half to full-day of training—whatever form it takes—it will bring great benefits back to the chapters.

Reminder: you'll be setting up and attending your holiday mixers soon. These mixers are a GREAT time to bring a prospective member. Be sure to get a flyer out to chapter members in e-mail which they can forward. Get the event in your local Builders Exchange newsletter and maybe ask a few of the bigger contractors to blast fax.

Next report comes in December. I look forward to the months ahead as much of our planning will be coming together. Happy turkey day, enjoy the games!!

*Sláinte !! (that means "good health" & all the best to you,!!)*

Edward Walsh  
Executive Director ASPE National  
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## Project Feature

# McCarthy Builders Uses Historical Database to Develop Estimate for Large Healthcare Project

by Pam Hunter

Having a strong background in healthcare projects helped McCarthy Building Companies, St. Louis, Missouri, prepare conceptual estimates on a nearly \$110 million healthcare facility project for the St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise, Idaho, says McCarthy's preconstruction director Josh Lawrence. The McCarthy estimating team used its own quantity-based historical database based on 30 years of McCarthy healthcare projects to come up with accurate estimates for the project, Lawrence says.

McCarthy is the construction manager on the project, which broke ground in September 2004 and is expected to be complete in the summer of 2007. The project consists of three major components. The first is a 400,000-square-foot, nine-story patient tower that will include 16 operating rooms, 32 intensive care rooms, four floors with 32 patient beds each as well as other typical hospital departments and rooms. The cost for the first component will be approximately \$95 million.

The second component is a 40,000-square-foot family maternity center with labor and delivery as well recovery rooms and a neonatal intensive care unit. The cost of this component will be approximately \$11 million to \$12 million. The third component will be a \$2 million renovation of a cancer treatment center at the medical center.

A primary construction challenge, Lawrence says, has been building the new patient tower completely around an existing skybridge which was connecting the two existing towers. "We had to maintain connectivity between the two existing towers and had to be able to transport patients between them the whole time," he says. Building around an existing skybridge required the construction team to leave out portions of the new structure so that the skybridge could be removed later. Once a



temporary corridor could be established through the new tower, the skybridge could be removed in pieces and the holes in the structure could be filled in. "That was a major challenge on the job," Lawrence says. Moreover, the construction team must ensure that the medical center remains fully operational throughout the construction process.

The project was a negotiated job. Another construction manager was brought on to do the work initially, but the scope of the project changed so much that the medical center opted to reopen the project to a select group of firms, including McCarthy, which won the contract.

McCarthy initially performed a design development verification estimate to determine whether the original contractor's estimate was accurate. After spending about three weeks on the verification estimate, McCarthy and the owner determined that the scope of the project had changed so much since the other contractor's initial estimate that it made sense for McCarthy to prepare a completely new design development estimate "from scratch," Lawrence says.

To prepare a new estimate, the McCarthy estimating team relied heavily on its historical database. "We keep all of our historical data so that when we come into a project where the design is not far enough along to measure everything because it's not shown on the drawings yet, we can look at what the actual final quantities and cost were for similar projects" Lawrence says. "We rely on our own conceptual ability to 'plug the holes' because we know what eventually gets designed into hospitals."

For example, a design or program may indicate that a 400,000-square-foot facility will have approximately 50,000 square feet of intensive care bed space, but not have any information or layouts for items such as partitions, doors, finishes, ductwork, power, lighting, and so on. The database, developed by McCarthy through an MC<sup>2</sup> estimating software program, calculates the quantities that are an average of past McCarthy projects. "It gives us the ability to develop very detailed estimates early on in the design, much before the design is fully developed," Lawrence says.

Lawrence's team also relied on information from a group of in-house estimators specializing in mechanical, electrical and plumbing estimates. "A lot of firms have to outsource that. We actually have a group of eight estimators in our department

that specialize specifically in these systems so we can internally develop quantities and costs," Lawrence says.

Because the project is a healthcare facility, a team, including McCarthy specialists, worked with the owner to develop infection control protocols. These protocols spell out procedures that the construction team will follow to ensure that patients are not exposed to infection or other risk, and that health conditions at the facility are not compromised during construction. The McCarthy estimating department worked with these specialists to be able to quantify the costs associated with the protocols.


Lawrence notes that the St. Alphonsus project, at a cost of more than \$100 million, was a large project for Boise. Because few projects of this magnitude are typically built in the city, McCarthy had to look outside of the immediate area for some



subcontractors and suppliers. "It required us to do a lot of market research and some solicitation in some regional cities like Portland, OR.; Salt Lake City and Spokane, WA.," he says. For example, McCarthy brought on a structural steel fabricator from Salt Lake City. "We spent a lot of time in those cities developing relationships with subcontractors and suppliers—encouraging them to bid on the job and provide budget help."



McCarthy will begin turning over the project to the St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center sometime next summer, Lawrence says. Despite the challenges, McCarthy and its estimating team have a long track record with healthcare projects. With 30 years of experience on healthcare facilities, "We know what eventually gets designed into hospitals," Lawrence says.



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# Analyzing 'Market Conditions Cost' As A Variable To The Pre-Construction Estimate

By Walter Lehner, CPE

Our construction firm was recently hired to perform preconstruction estimating services for a local community college that was building a new 70,000 sf magnet school addition. We were contracted to develop separate estimating budgets for the initial schematic design phase, design development phase, contract document phase, and finally, the bid phase. The budget limit was capped at \$21 million.

We put together the initial budgetary estimate for the schematic phase. This estimate detailed the cost of the project followed by the usual percentage add-ons, i.e. building permit, liability insurance, overhead, profit, bonds, and an anticipated escalation of material and labor. Since actual construction was not to commence for nearly 10 months, a 4% material and labor escalation was included.

Following the initial review of the estimate, we were not comfortable that our estimate for the magnet school did not include an "undefined cost" we were experiencing with our lump-sum bidding on similar projects. Kicked back in my office chair, I sat with two estimating colleagues around my desk and mulled over what we were going to call this undefined cost. We knew we needed to include this cost in our pre-construction estimate. This undefined cost, we anticipated, would not be expected nor necessarily embraced by the owner. This undefined cost was a "higher than normal overhead and profit" that contractors were putting on bid projects for certain segments of the market at certain project values. This cost was not really a defined cost, but a trend we were experiencing over the past six months. It was a cost that was difficult to assess and that was not reflected in cost surveys, published in ENR or McGraw Hill cost reports.

We were aware that the magnet school project fit the profile of the "higher than normal O&P" because of the location, dollar value, and lack of state-approved contractors available to bid this work. We knew we needed to add this cost to our bottom line estimate, but we lacked a clear definition we could attribute to this cost. Knowing that we would need to define this cost in an upcoming presentation to the owner, we brainstormed ideas to determine exactly the terminology we would use to define this cost. We finally agreed to call it a "market conditions cost."

This "market conditions cost" is not to be confused with material and labor escalation, but a cost that reflects either positive and negative profit shifts in the market from the "normal" profit margins that contractors would place on bid estimates. This profit shift would not apply across the board for all construction projects, but is more applicable to certain market segments or conditions. For example: municipalities

performing ADA upgrades and code updates for educational facilities may limit the work to summer months due to the absent student population. Since this work may not be spread throughout the year, school districts unwittingly flood the market place with market-specific work. Once contractors who normally perform this work are loaded up with a significant backlog, they may decide not to bid any more projects during the summer time frame. This further exacerbates the lessening pool of remaining contractors available to bid this type of work. If already "heavy-backlogged" contractors do decide to bid the project, the contractor may put an exorbitant O&P margin in the bid proposal hoping for a "home run" in profits. Another overt example would be construction after natural disasters, such as Katrina.

This *market conditions cost* is not new to estimators. Estimators prefer to keep this quiet. This is really "insider" information. Good estimators intuitively know market costs by consistently bidding work. The estimator translates this knowledge into a strategy to formulize a deviation (plus or minus) from the standard overhead and profit normally allocated to each estimate. In theory, considering an over-generalized assumption that the estimated cost of the project should be equal for all submitted bids, then the only variable should overhead and profit. Keeping this over-simplified cost analysis in mind, the estimator can gauge his/her competitor's deviation from the "normal" overhead & profit by the bid results. Obviously, in practice, this does not apply and deviations from the normal overhead and profit will not be the sole determinate of bid estimate ranges. But, it is important to recognize that a market conditions cost does exist. Not only for the estimator bidding the project, but also for the owner, informed that a preconstruction estimate can vary (plus or minus several percentage points) due to market conditions cost.

So, during our presentation of our schematic design estimate to the facility director and the college president, it was no surprise the luke-warm response we received regarding the addition of our market conditions cost to the overall budget estimate. This proved further unpopular since we also recommended the deletion of the college president's outdoor ice-skating rink. The cost of the ice rink was roughly the budget overage on the \$21 million budget cap for the magnet school.

Our team was grilled on the market conditions cost, which added a significant cost to the overall project. In fact, we felt so strongly that due to the lack of state-qualified contractors in that location and the number of similar projects that were currently bidding and similar projects slated to go out for bid

at the same time as this magnet school, that it warranted an increased market conditions cost of three percent. This 3% was the positive deviation for the "normal overhead and profit" we experienced that contractors were profit loading onto their projects. Ironically, the approximate cost of the president's highly favored outdoor ice-skating rink to the magnet school was approximately three percent.

The facilities director argued (on behalf of the college president) that our market conditions cost could shift (positive or negative) in a period of 10 months. We did not disagree with her assessment, but we felt it important that this market conditions cost was at least recognized, and yes, included in the budgetary estimate. Finally after a robust conversation, we mutually agreed that the 3% market conditions cost in the project would remain as budgeted and that the cost for ice-skating rink be separated under an add alternate to the project. If the market conditions cost shifted in the next 10 months and the 3% increase was not realized, then the ice-skating rink could be added to the project under the included alternate.

So the problems we realized with including market conditions cost is not only recognizing it as a variable cost, but also the difficulties in timing these costs, so that this cost would remain relevant in the pre-construction estimate phase. In the lump-sum bid scenario, the allocation of the market conditions cost is more readily understood and applied because the data is most current and relevant. In the pre-construction estimate scenario, the inclusion or application of the market conditions cost is more difficult. The problem with estimating market conditions cost for pre-construction estimating services becomes obvious because the ability to read market conditions six months or a year from today's current condition is tantamount to almost guessing. Not exactly what an estimator wants to do. But, as professional estimators involved with pre-construction estimates, we owe the owner the professional obligation of addressing this cost, however unpopular. If the market conditions cost is brought to the attention of the owner, this at least opens dialogue to whether or not this cost should be included in the pre-construction estimate.

*Walter H. Lehner AIC, CPC, CPE, is director of operations for Gar-San Corporation. He is a member and a past president of ASPE's Nutmeg Chapter 60 and an adjunct instructor in the construction management program at Central Connecticut State University. You can reach him at [wlehner@garsan.com](mailto:wlehner@garsan.com).* ●



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By **George Hague**  
President/CEO  
ConEst Software Systems

## Estimator/Project Manager -- One Role or Two?

Estimating and project management are two primary activities in an electrical contracting business. At some point, all companies have to decide whether to treat these two roles as one or to separate the functions and hire both a

professional estimator *and* a project manager. The reason for choosing one approach over the other depends on a number of factors.

**Size of Company** – A small company may not have the volume of business that is needed to support both a full-time estimator *and* a project manager. Mid-sized companies may have the resources for one estimator and several project managers while a large company would usually employ several estimators and project managers. The first thing you need to do is assess your company's needs. If your company's workload is not sufficient to support a full-time estimator, the obvious solution is to combine the functions into an estimator/project manager role. This responsibility can be challenging during critical points in the project cycle. To help alleviate the stress of such a position, careful scheduling of jobs and training other office personnel to handle routine responsibilities will ease the

workload during those peak times.

**Resource Allocation** – Estimators focus on the future and the next job while project managers are primarily concerned with what is happening right now. The estimator is preparing bids for future projects; meanwhile current projects are either just getting underway, are in full swing or are at the critical final phase. A project manager whose attention is diverted to estimating new jobs will not be able to effectively address and complete the current projects just as new bids will not be as carefully prepared if the estimator's attention is occupied by current job demands. Also, you should take into account the number of jobs your project manager typically supervises. The responsibility of keeping track of several jobs in progress further limits the project manager's time. Remember, the most critical part of a project comes in the final phases; 90% of the project manager's work is done in the last 10% of the job. This is when more attention to detail and schedules is critical. Missed milestones can mean extra cost and delays.

**Proficiency** – The estimator must have the ability to follow procedures and develop processes to ensure that the bid is accurate and that errors have not, and will not, be made. Ideally, the estimator should have some engineering experience in order to uncover flaws in the design when reviewing plans. Problems with design regarding building codes, constructability and other safety factors can add to the project's bottom line and cut into profits. Through value engineering, an experienced estimator not only helps bring the project in the door, but can also add to project efficiency once construction is underway.

Estimating provides the information required for managing the material costs and labor hours efficiently and effectively. This job management information is important to the project manager for job costing and tracking. Without a good solid estimate, project management is no more than putting out fires and responding to crisis situations. Project managers need to be task-oriented people with a strong sense of urgency and must also focus on starting and finishing tasks on schedule. The project manager's knowledge of their crews strengths and weaknesses as well as the working conditions on a job site and their own experience in the field make them best suited to schedule the right people for the job to complete the project on time.

**Specialization** – Look at estimating and project management as a production line. Estimators estimate, and project managers manage. The split between these two job professions allows each to become more efficient. A full-time estimator becomes more proficient and able to complete accurate bids quickly. The experience in the field for a full time project manager develops his or her team management skills and product expertise to complete the project on schedule. Both

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individuals improve their skills because they specialize in their profession.

**Communication** – An advantage for the individual who is both the estimator/project manager is that there is no miscommunication between the two job functions. When the estimator is also managing the project, he or she is more familiar with details and conditions of the job, thus saving time in turning the project over. Just be sure to avoid the temptation to delay decisions to the project management stage when you are performing both roles...the result could be a loss of time and money.

When the roles are separated, it is essential that the estimator and the project manager communicate effectively with each other. The project manager has specific knowledge of the work required for the job and is, therefore, an important resource for the estimator in producing an accurate estimate. A good estimator is laying the framework for the project. If the estimate is done completely and accurately, the project manager will experience fewer problems on the job.

The success of both the estimator and the project manager requires a cooperative team environment of encouragement and support. Both roles are critical to the success of your company. Skilled project management is often the difference between a profitable job and one that produces a loss. Effective estimating and job planning of labor schedules and material procurement are major factors in determining the actual cost of a project. Ultimately, it is careful job planning and precise plan execution that is the necessary groundwork that will reap desired benefits and profits for your company whether you hire one individual as your estimator/project manager or separate the two roles between two individuals.

**Author Biography**

With over 35 years in the electrical industry, George Hague's credentials include the following areas of electrical contracting, professional estimating, electrical licensing and electrical instruction:

- Co-founder/Former Partner - Gemco Electric, Fall River, Massachusetts (1966)

- Chief Estimator – ICS Electric, Weymouth, Massachusetts (1984)
- Chief Estimator - P&H Electrical Contractors, Lawrence, Massachusetts (1986)
- Former Certified Provider for Mandatory Continuing Education for electrical license renewals for the states of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont
- Former Instructor for The Associated Builders and Contractors Association (ABC) of Massachusetts Instructor of Electric I and
- II Continuing Education Courses
- Founder and President of East Coast Estimators, Inc. providing sub-contract electrical estimating services for contractors throughout New England
- President and CEO of ConEst Software Systems – established 1989

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# Save Time with LEED On-Line

By Jessie Sackett, U.S. Green Building Council

Much of the building industry is well aware of the benefits of green building. But until recently, the process of achieving LEED certification could be intimidating for smaller projects and too time consuming for major developers or architects who might otherwise be interested in certifying dozens—or even hundreds—of projects.

Last November, USGBC announced a series of refinements and enhancements to the LEED Rating System, including a new online certification process, that greatly reduce the time and cost of LEED certification. With LEED online now available for LEED for new construction version 2.2, LEED for existing buildings operation and maintenance and LEED for commercial interiors tenant improvements, USGBC's mission of market transformation has gained new momentum.

## Why Change?

A year ago, USGBC risked being a victim of its own success. The complex, paper-based LEED certification process (which was not very environmentally responsible in and of itself) made it difficult for staff to keep up with the workload and with thousands of projects in the pipeline and goals to expand even further; the future was daunting. More importantly, LEED's relative success masked the fact that untold numbers of projects were choosing not to use LEED because of the

perceived difficulty of completing the documentation and certification process.

USGBC knew that if it wanted to make its vision of market transformation a reality, something had to change. So, in early 2005, USGBC conducted an exhaustive review of the LEED certification process. Nearly every person interviewed cited the same core issues: the application process was too unwieldy, labor-intensive and expensive. This finding was supported by market research indicating that a better process was second only to rising energy costs as a driver for stronger adoption of green building practices.

In light of these findings, in November 2005, USGBC announced a series of major refinements and enhancements to the LEED Rating System, including the development of a fully online application process and streamlined documentation requirements. At the initial launch, LEED online could only accept certifications for LEED for new construction version 2.1. But now the wait is over: In May 2006, USGBC launched LEED online forms and templates for new construction version 2.2, existing buildings and commercial interiors. Now everyone can take advantage of LEED online, which one member told Tom Hicks, vice president of LEED, was the most important thing that had happened to her since she got married!

## What Changed?

**Streamlined Documentation and Certification:** Applying for LEED certification used to require completing a complex and cumbersome Excel workbook, as well as providing hundreds of pages of additional documentation. Now, the process more closely aligns itself with existing instruments of service to eliminate the need for thick binders of supporting information. Project teams can download Credit Templates from LEED online that contain easy-to-use data fields for most of the information required for documentation. Existing instruments of service—like CAD drawings and energy modeling data—can be uploaded to LEED online to fulfill any additional documentation requirements. The project workspace will also have built-in flexibility for alternate compliance paths. In addition, the LEED certification review process has been streamlined and made significantly more user-friendly.

**Design and Construction Phase Submittals:** Project teams will have the option to submit documentation in two separate phases: first for the design phase, and then the construction phase. Submitting design phase credits at one time and then moving to the construction phase facilitates ongoing feedback to the project throughout the project's progression. This will allow design teams to modify design documents prior to commencing construction, and will give teams and building owners confidence that the project is on track for certification.

**LEED Goes Paperless:** Not only have the documentation requirements been streamlined, but all documentation can now



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be submitted online: no more cumbersome Excel spreadsheets or heavy binders! Instead, LEED online allows projects teams to work collaboratively to organize, calculate and submit the technical and scientific data required to earn certification. LEED online also enables USGBC staff and project teams to interact to a greater extent than ever before and facilitates USGBC staff's review of the documentation.

LEED online employs Adobe LiveCycle software to power simple, two-page Adobe PDF forms that are associated with specific credits. These new templates offer project teams a number of significant advantages:

- **Easy Calculations:** The PDF forms contain built-in functions for calculating complex equations for heat loss, solar gain and other relevant LEED measurements, greatly reducing the amount of time project teams have to spend completing the credit.
- **Enhanced Collaboration:** The forms make it easy for project teams to collaborate. Team members can download the specific forms they need, and can complete the Adobe PDF forms offline and then email the forms to coworkers for additional input.
- **Simplified Submittals:** Instead of sending USGBC thick binders of paper documentation, project teams can upload the completed PDF forms along with supporting documentation.
- **Streamlined Reviews and Improved Customer Service:** Project teams, USGBC staff and third-party experts can conveniently review the application information. After the application has been reviewed, all the associated forms and documentation are stored in LEED online; design and construction managers can visit the online workspace at any time to see if their applications have been approved or if additional information and documentation need to be submitted. Final applications with all comments in Adobe PDF can be archived for future reference.
- **Increased Security:** The new system also enhances information security, because username and password permissions are associated with each Adobe PDF form. Instead of sending an entire workbook to every member of a project team, project managers can limit users' access to only the specific forms they need.

Green building is about people, about creating healthy places for us to live and work. USGBC is also about people: about listening to the needs of our members and the market in order to provide them with the resources they need to create healthy places. With LEED online, USGBC has greatly reduced the time and cost of LEED certification, making it more accessible and bringing us that much closer to a healthy, sustainable future.

*This article originally appeared in the July 2006 issue of Environmental Design + Construction. Reprinted with permission.*

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# From ASPE Membership Committee -- For a Rainy Day

By Mary Steinmann, CSAM

It is an honor to have been chosen as your new Membership Chair. A committee has been assembled that includes representatives from around the country. NE Region: Douglas Burdick, CPE; SE Region: Ronnie Garrett, CPE; NW Region: Monty Everson, E; SW Region: Larry Hendrick, CPE; Central Region: John Irving, E; NE Region: William Manfredonia, CPE, SM advisor; NW Region: Curtis Kolar, CPE, advisor.

We welcome your ideas and input. Our main focus this year will be member satisfaction. We want this to be a rewarding experience, and one you want to share with others.

Through its membership, ASPE enables estimators to meet, exchange ideas, and get to know each other. In addition, ASPE provides a forum for the discussion of construction-related information.

During the social hour and dinner, estimators can discuss ideas, share experiences, and seek resolutions to difficult situations. In addition, at each monthly meeting ASPE has an expert speak on a construction-related topic to keep our membership informed about some aspect of the construction business and to enhance our professional performance.

We get many benefits by attending a chapter meeting. Among them: fellowship with others, news about the marketplace, the chance to put a face to a name, public relations for our companies and education.

I want to focus just a bit on education. In the past I have heard occasionally from a member that they will be skipping this month's meeting because the topic may not be relevant to their current book of business. It always amazes me when I hear this.

Several years ago, as chapter president, I had the pleasure of sitting next to one of our "seasoned" members, one who had not missed a meeting in years. I asked him why. He talked about the usual things, and then said something I will never forget: "Besides, you never know when I will need the information from this meeting. I have worked for several subcontractors, a supplier, and two general contractors, one public and one private. So I am bound to use it one day."

If you look beyond this one man to our group as a whole, the words ring all the more true. As our industry changes, we are asked to stretch, to take on new roles, and to bring new value to the table. Maybe some day we will need a piece of information to solve a critical problem we are having on a project, or to save a subcontractor from crisis. Our members and others take time from their families and their lives to share with us something their experience has taught them... in most cases an area where they are considered experts. They share it willingly, and with an open heart.

Be open as well to receiving this knowledge, and if you can't use it now, save it for a rainy day.

In the coming months I hope you will find your chapter meetings are a valuable resource for estimating ideas, a place for relaxation and a relief from stress.

## TIPS FOR CHAPTER LEADERS

From Ronnie Garrett, CPE, come these tips for chapter leaders :

Our chapter has always ranked well on retention and as the 2004-2005 chapter president, it was my goal to make sure we didn't lose anyone on my watch. My plan to achieve this was pretty simple:

- (1) Get as many people as possible involved with chapter affairs other than showing up at meetings or even worse just paying dues and not even coming to the meetings.
- (2) Instead of having a committee to call and remind people of the meeting times, I would personally call those who did not attend and let them know they were missed.
- (3) During the opening of the meetings and during greetings before, let them know how glad you are that they were able to include us in their busy schedule.
- (4) Always remind them of at least one of the many benefits of being a member during closing comments.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve.

See you at the dinner table!

Mary L Steinmann, CSAM  
Principal, The Construction Connection  
Immediate Past President ASPE Chapter 54  
National Membership Chair ASPE



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