

All members, families and friends of **POLISH-AMERICAN ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION** are cordially invited to attend our monthly meeting. We extend special invitation to Polish engineers and technicians who recently came to Chicago area.

DATE: **Friday, April 17, 2009**

TIME: 7:30 – 8:00 pm Social time
8:00 pm – Business and Technical Session

PLACE: **Copernicus Center**
5216 West Lawrence Ave.
Chicago, Illinois

SPEAKER: **Mr. Jan S. Plachta, Ph.D., P.E., S.E.**
Senior Structural Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Chicago District

TOPIC: **Panama Canal**

PANAMA CANAL is considered the most significant engineering achievement of the 20th century. About 500 years ago, Spain's King Charles ordered surveying work for the passage thru the Isthmus of Panama. Wars and political situation in Europe delayed the project until nineteenth century. In 1880 Frenchman Ferdinand Marie de Lesseps based on his success in completing construction of the Suez Canal organized a company for the construction of the Panama Canal. Few years later Lesseps failed, his company filed for bankruptcy. In 1899 the US Congress authorized an Isthmian Canal Commission to investigate possibilities of a canal in Central America. In 1914 construction of the Panama Canal was completed under supervision of the U.S. Army engineer officers.

Currently arriving at Panama on a ship one is surprised by the dozens of ships waiting for their turn to go thru the Canal. There is only a limited number of daily transit slots thru the Canal. Nobody can take a chance to miss his turn, so the ships idle for days for their turn to go thru causing enormous cost to the global shipping trade. The Panama Canal Authority started a new over five billion dollars project to eliminate the existing congestion. The new project includes construction of new larger sets of locks, excavation of about five miles of new channel and dredging of several million cubic meters of soil material. Construction completion is scheduled for 2014, the canal's 100th anniversary.

The talk will present the fascinating history of the canal construction, its structural components and the new expansion project.

Mr. Jan Plachta is a Senior Structural Engineer at the Chicago District Corps of Engineers office. He has the Diplom Engineer degree from the Technical University of Vienna, Austria; M.S. degree in Structural Engineering from the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago; and a PhD degree in Soil Mechanics from the Politechnika Krakowska in Cracow, Poland. He worked on great variety of Chicago District flood control projects, does perform periodic inspections of Corps of Engineers major civil works projects whose failure could endanger public safety. He is recipient of numerous performance awards, in 1995 he was elected finalist as an Outstanding Professional

Employee in the Chicago Metropolitan Area. He has numerous technical publications in professional periodicals. He is a Fellow member of the Society of the American Military Engineers and of the American Society of Civil Engineers.



ELECTION OF POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS (PAC), ILLINOIS DIVISION were held on March 25, 2009, at the offices of Polish National Alliances, 6100 N. Cicero Ave. in Chicago. This was a great success for the Polish American Engineers Association. A long time member of our organization, Mr. Casey Chlebek was elected President, Mr. Michael Niedzinski was elected Vice-President, Mr. Witold Pawlikowski was elected Financial Secretary and Mr. Jan Plachta was elected as the Corresponding Secretary. Mr. Casey Chlebek received support from numerous Polish organizations in Chicago. In his agenda Casey said that the Polish American Congress needs a renewal stimulus for the future of Polonia, he plans to mobilize Polonia of all ages to pursue the “American Dream” by exercising their constitutional rights to improve our political, social and economic status in the United States.



CONFERENCE OF POLISH ENGINEERING ASSOCIATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA will be held in Montreal, Canada, between 8-10 May, 2009. Program of the Conference is currently being prepared, everybody is invited for their ideas and recommendations. In attendance we will have Technical University professors from Poland, United States, Canada, and as in the past there will be numerous representatives of active in Europe Polish Engineering Associations.



JOBS: We have been informed about Primera Job Postings for:

- Transmission Line Design Engineer
- Electrical Engineering Manager

These are excellent opportunities for experienced individuals who are interested in working for an engineering and architectural services firm. Qualified candidates are requested to call Ms. Elizabeth Conrad - Human Resources Director: (312) 242-6416. More details on our web site.



RALPH MODJESKI SCHOLARSHIP. As in previous years we will be accepting scholarship applications. Amount of scholarships will depend on the results of our fundraising efforts. Applications should be mailed by the end of June 2009. Scholarship Committee will perform review during July 2009, and award is scheduled for our September meeting. For applications or additional information please check our website: www.polishengineers.org or call Miroslaw Niedzinski 773-415-1818, Jan Plachta 773-775-7599 or Walter Rymysza 847-806-1704.