

SPRING FORUM REPORT
Chapter 67 – Orange County
March 20, 2010

Strengths of our Chapter:

The Chapter's commitment to providing educational and networking opportunities through its monthly luncheons remains very strong. By providing interesting and industry-relevant speakers/topics, combined with opportunities to earn MCLE, SR/WA recertification, and other credits whenever possible, luncheon attendance has been strong.

After a long vacancy, the Chapter finally filled its vacant Education Chair and has now held three classes in the past four months, with several more scheduled for this year. Our two December classes were resounding successes and, together with a well-attended half-day seminar last spring and our successful hosting of the annual Tri-Chapter Luncheon in December, the Chapter finished the year only slightly below breakeven. While this may not seem like much, it is remarkable considering where the Chapter was and where it appeared to be heading at the beginning of 2009. I consider the year-end results a tremendous accomplishment for the current Board.

Weaknesses of our Chapter:

While luncheon attendance has been high of late, participation by employees of local public agencies remains lower than desired. In the past, the Chapter attempted to increase monthly attendance by that demographic through the offering of free lunches during certain promotional months. While this worked to increase agency attendance during the discounted months, it had no apparent carryover effect upon attendance in non-discount months. Because the Chapter already subsidizes a portion of every lunch sold each month, and given the state of our finances and the lack of any income from courses for most of this year, we could not continue offering free lunches as an attendance incentive (especially since attendance by non-agency employees was high and the Chapter already was incurring large deficits each month on that account). With things now hopefully getting better, we may soon be in a position to begin offering some additional incentives to increase regular agency attendance. (Perhaps creating a two-tiered pricing structure where agency employees would pay a fixed lower amount for their lunches every month? I would be curious if any other chapters have tried this and, if so, what the results were.)

Goals of Our Chapter for the Coming Year:

The Chapter looks to continue ramping up its education program by offering several more courses in 2010. We have been working with local members to secure free course

locations, and using local facilitators, in order to keep costs down and minimize the Chapter's exposure in the event of lower attendance.

Last year, the Chapter held its first half-day seminar in several years. The seminar was a tremendous success, both in terms of participant satisfaction and in terms of actually earning the chapter a small profit. We are now planning another half-day seminar for May 11, 2010. We have a timely topic, namely, the intersection of renewable energy and right of way issues, and several excellent speakers lined up.

A goal for the incoming Board next year should be to build upon the success of year by planning some kind of a social event for Chapter members, such as a golf tournament, boat cruise, etc. The Chapter has not done anything similar in the time that I have been involved with it, at least that I can recall, so I am not sure how the membership will receive such an event.

New Ideas, Successes, Recommendations to Share with Other Chapters:

None at this time.

Our Chapter Needs Assistance With...

Nothing at this time.