Event Brings Partners Together to Showcase Industry Innovation

At IECA’s 2014 Environmental Connection conference in Nashville, Tennessee this past February, a group from Auburn University (AU) in Auburn, Alabama discussed the possibility of doing a University Partner (UP) Roadshow at the Auburn University Erosion and Sediment Control Testing Facility (AU-ESCTF). The goal was to have a two-day event with classroom education the first day and a field event the second day.

From Idea to Reality

Not even three months later, the idea became a reality. The Department of Civil Engineering at Auburn University hosted an erosion and sediment training seminar this past May attended by 165 participants, which included industry vendors, practitioners and about 20 university students. In partnership with the Alabama Technology Transfer (T2) Center at AU, IECA’s University Partners Program and the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), this event showcased research being performed by various members of the IECA University Partners Program in the southeast geared towards solving erosion and sediment control problems encountered in the construction sector.

Wesley C. Zech is the Brasfield & Gorrie Associate Professor of Construction Engineering and Management in the Department of Civil Engineering at Auburn University. Dr. Zech attended the University at Buffalo where he earned his B.S., M.E. and Ph.D. degrees in Civil Engineering. He currently teaches courses in the areas of construction engineering, construction safety and health management, and erosion and sediment control. A primary focus of Dr. Zech’s research program is in the area of evaluating the performance of erosion and sediment control practices using large-scale testing techniques.

Jimmy Eanes, CPESC, CESSWI, CMP, is IECA’s Education Director and has over 22 years of professional training experience in education program management and development. He holds a Masters degree in Education with over 16 years of focused training in project management, regulatory and technical content delivery. Mr. Eanes and his wife Nancy currently live in north Texas, and he enjoys golf and playing his guitar when time allows.

Event Coordinators: Alabama Technology Transfer Center at Auburn University, International Erosion Control Association and the Alabama Department of Transportation

University Partners: Auburn University, North Carolina State University and the University of Georgia

Sponsors: Flexamat, Hanes Geo Components, Sunshine Supplies, Thompson Engineering and Twin Oaks Environmental

Vendors: American Excelsior, Applied Polymer Systems, DDD Erosion Control, East Coast Erosion Control, Enviro-Pro Geosynthetics, Filtrexx, GeoHay and Pennington

Special Recognitions:

Wesley C. Zech, Ph.D., Brasfield & Gorrie Associate Professor of Construction Engineering & Management, Dept. of Civil Engineering, Auburn University

Wesley N. Donald, Ph.D., Post-doctoral Research Fellow, Dept. of Civil Engineering, Auburn University

Michael A. Perez, Graduate Research Assistant, Dept. of Civil Engineering, Auburn University
“IECA was thrilled to conduct our first UP Roadshow event at Auburn University. Wesley Zech, Wesley Donald and Michael Perez, and their research support team and staff, went overboard in making this an incredible event,” said Jimmy Eanes, IECA’s Education Director.

Also participating were Rich McLaughlin with North Carolina State University (NCST) and Mark Risse with the University of Georgia (UGA). Each school presented case studies from their endeavors, and professors and graduate students presented results of their research. An added bonus was having EPA Region 4 representatives from Atlanta, Georgia. Mike Mitchell, EPA Region 4 Stormwater Authority and Captain Paul Gagliano, U.S. Public Health Service Engineer Officer for EPA Region 4, presented updates and services available through Region 4 EPA’s stormwater and watershed programs.

Three-time IECA Presenter of the Year, Barry Fagan, addressed the group on the practical aspects of working in our profession. “Seeing the testing facility move from an idea and sketch as a means for discovering truly best management practices and techniques, to a first-class venue for erosion and sediment control training, was very exciting for me personally. The event highlighted the state of regulation, the state of research and the state of practice. It was an excellent stormwater experience for our region,” noted Fagan.

The primary goal of the seminar was to provide participants exposure to innovative research being performed on erosion and sediment control practices commonly employed in both horizontal and vertical construction. In addition, participants gained knowledge in governing compliance regulations, leadership tactics and hands-on design and implementation tools to provide efficient and effective erosion and sediment controls. By sharing knowledge gained through research, industry participants are now better prepared to achieve environmental compliance. Undergraduate and graduate students from the participating universities were in attendance and gained exposure to the erosion and sediment control industry, various industry participants and relevant research to the field.

The two-day training effort was divided into classroom and outdoor field instructional sessions. The classroom sessions included presentations on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s perspective on environmental compliance; the IECA University Partners Program; the art of managing construction; and the latest findings from cutting-edge research being performed by AU, NCST and UGA on effective erosion and sediment control practice implementation.

The field instructional session was held at the AU-ESCTF and provided attendees with a hands-on opportunity to (1) learn proper installation techniques on various erosion and sediment controls to achieve improved performance; (2) observe full-scale, channelized flow testing demonstrations; and (3) interact with vendors and manufacturers of current erosion and sediment control products. This hands-on approach exposed attendees to live installation demonstrations as well as exposure to full-scale channelized flow demonstrations showing performance of different practices and products that are common or innovative within the construction industry.

The field instructional demonstrations showed proper techniques on construction entrance/exit pads, stockpile management, proper use/installation of erosion control blankets, various perimeter control practices, the proper use/installation of ditch checks (i.e. wattles, silt fence, sandbags, etc.) under concentrated flow, various silt fence perimeter control installation techniques (i.e. trench vs. slicing), different perimeter control configurations (i.e. j-hooks, smiles), the use of slope interrupters, installation and use of temporary down slope drains, hydromulching techniques, a variety of innovative inlet protection practices, a floating turbidity barrier system, channel lining systems, the use of floc blocks in channelized, sediment-laden flow and the
”The event was truly outstanding in all aspects: seminar presentations, vendor/product exhibits, test facility demonstrations and explanations! In addition, it was very encouraging to see the keen interest of the participants from the various sectors of construction stormwater,” said IECA Member Earl Norton, Erosion and Sediment Control Program Coordinator, Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee.

According to Eanes, IECA’s future goal is to follow this same model where one university hosts the event, and other universities participate as well. “Collaboration among a region’s universities brings the most cutting-edge information to one location, where it can be successfully transferred with classroom instruction and field demonstrations to ensure the most progressive and complete erosion and sediment control training anywhere,” he said.

IECA WEBINAR

TMDL Compliance Planning

Instructor: Craig S. Benson
Date: December 17, 2014 at 12:00 PM Central Time
PDH: One certificate is issued per paid registration.
Level: Intermediate
Pricing: $50 for members/$65 for non-members

This webinar is a combination of basic construction specifications training and information specific to erosion and sediment control. The SWPPP, the NPDES Permit and the EPA or State regulations are not construction specifications. This course includes seven modules, which range from general specifications theory and practice to erosion and sediment control specifics with example specifications included. Attendees will learn how to understand the process of sediment TMDL development, implementation and monitoring; how to identify categories of land use that contribute to sediment pollution and how to develop processes for selecting BMPs for each land use.

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