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Time for Geologist Registration

By Guest Authors Mavis D. Kent, OR E0456 and Richard (Rick) C. Kent, OR E0099

The Oregon Geologist Licensing Law became effective on July 1, 1977. Cooperation between the public and private sectors of the profession helped ensure successful passage. Geology had become more than the common public perception of a rock hobby. It had evolved into a professional life capable of offering safeguards to the public's life, health, property, and environment. Mavis was working as the engineering geologist with a local soils engineering company, and Rick was working as the engineering geologist with Pacific Power & Light Company (PP&L).

Thirty-two engineering geologists, state geologists, teachers, and engineers were actively involved in creating licensing for Oregon geologists. Licensing would provide a legal way to assure the public that geologic evaluations were being performed by qualified experts. The bill for geologist registration was prepared by Herb Schlicker and Lloyd Staples from their offices in Oregon State University and re-

leased on 04/16/1976, with major revisions made on 06/10/1976 and 10/12/1976. As the AEG Portland Section (AEG-P) Chair of the Professional Relations and Public Information committee, Rick sent copies of the bill to the entire membership roster of the AEG-P. State Geologist Andy Corcoran spoke at AEG-P on 04/22/1976 and outlined the bill, which borrowed from other state registration laws but mainly from Georgia. A final mass mailing of the bill was sent to every geologist on a list of interested parties on 11/12/1976 by the 'Geologist Registration Committee' with the heading of "Why Registration for Geologists". The last line of this memo read: "We would come to the aid of ourselves; we must register for survival."

Some impetus was also gained for registration when the City of Portland adopted a Uniform Building Code (UBC), and the State was also thinking about using an equivalent UBC. AEG was inviting speakers on related topics such as a talk by John Beaulieu titled 'Geologic Hazards of the Southwest Oregon Coast'. The awareness, and subsequent need

for applied geology investigations, was growing rapidly. Geology was becoming the need-to-know science, so to speak, not only for engineering geology, but for affiliations like geophysics, hydrogeology, mining, geochemistry, paleontology, geomorphology, petrology and the traditional petroleum industry.

Increases in construction, fueled by growth in population and commercial and industrial entities was overwhelming many inexperienced planning departments who had no guidance on how to develop or review and approve engineering geology documents that evaluated geologic conditions and hazards. The construction setting included building major facilities like the Trojan Nuclear Plant, as well as infrastructure in and around Portland involving bridges, dam integrity, slope stability, and foundations. The need to include geologic evaluations was the result of awareness of problems in California such as the defunct plans for Auburn Dam that were presented at local talks. Mavis was the field engineering geologist of the engineering firm contract-

Time for Geologist Registration, cont.



The mission of the Board of Geologist Examiners is to help assure the safety, health, and welfare of Oregonians with regard to the public practice of geology.



ed on several PP&L nuclear power plant investigations, including Downey in the West Hills. Rick was the PP&L engineering geologist in-charge for 22 nuclear site investigations through the Pacific Northwest including Sutherland and also provided engineering geology guidance to Portland General Electric (PGE) who at the time had no staff geology department.

Parallel interest in making sure the public understood excellence and credibility in the geologic profession was being put forward by AIPG (Association of Professional Geologists). Rick became the Secretary/Treasurer of the AIPG Oregon Section during 1977 after licensing became law in Oregon. AIPG was pushing for a

geology licensing board that would be autonomous from the engineering boards who held different views of applied geology. It was becoming obvious that the market for experienced engineering geologists was rapidly expanding. AIPG was proposing self-certification and less supportive of getting government involved via registration boards.

Along with technical qualifications, it became necessary to create ethical standards. In 1978, Mavis used her experience with registration and approached AEG with the idea of writing a Professional Practice Guideline and became the first editor. Mavis also is the first female member of the Oregon State Board of Geologists Examiners, having been

appointed to a term beginning in 1982.

Another outgrowth from obtaining Geologist registration in Oregon was the expansion of the City of Portland Geotechnical Advisory Committee by inclusion of Registered Geologists. The Committee's purpose was to assist the city in review of complex building permit applications. Mavis was appointed to the Committee by the Governor and served as Vice Chair in 1980-1981.

The need for registration of geologists in Oregon continues to support the public health, safety and welfare.

The authors thank John Beaulieu for his input and long-standing fellowship.



OREGON GOVERNOR ROBERT STRAUB SIGNING GEOLOGISTS REGISTRATION BILL AT STATE CAPITOL, SALEM, JULY, 1977. LEFT TO RIGHT; MAVIS KENT, HERB SCHLICKER, JOHN BEAULIEU, RICK KENT.