Dear Utilities Branch Members:

Welcome to the Utilities Branch and to our first branch newsletter! As Branch Chair, I look forward to working with and for you to make this a viable organization.

I have been a safety professional for the past 30 years. My experience includes 17 years in insurance/risk management and 19 years in the public sector. I have been a Professional Member of ASSE and a Certified Safety Professional for the past 20 years. I was the Public Sector Division (now Public Sector Practice Specialty) Newsletter Editor for five years and the Assistant Administrator for one year. It has been more than a decade since I have been involved in a practice specialty, and I look forward to my tenure as the Utilities Branch Chair.

I cannot do this alone. To that end, many of you have asked, “What can I do? I want to be involved.” As you know, an organization like this is only as good as its members and what they put into it. I have been amazed at the number of members who have already signed on to the Branch. As of mid-July, we already have 117 members.

The current list of volunteers who have accepted positions are:

- Branch Vice Chair—Carl Griffith, INTREN, Inc.
- Executive Secretary—Bill Paolello, Pepco Holdings
- Membership Chair—David Driver, Tennessee Valley Authority
- Newsletter Editor—Mark Hanke, Prairie State Generating Company
- Body of Knowledge—Christopher Jeter, Tennessee Valley Authority
- Awards and Honors—Michael Carter, Tennessee Valley Authority

This branch has the potential to be on par with the largest of the practice specialties. We represent a multitude of utilities, including water, wastewater, telecommunications, power and all of the industries that support our operations, especially the contractors who build and assist us to maintain our facilities. Our current and potential members have facilities in just about every city, county, state, country around the globe. We are public and private utilities and are contracted to public agencies. We design, build, operate and maintain every community’s vital infrastructure, keeping them powered up, connected and healthy 24 hours a day, all year long.

So get the word out. Talk to your fellow ASSE members when you go to your local monthly meetings. Let them know that the Utilities Branch has been formed. By joining the Construction Practice Specialty for a $20 annual fee, their membership in the Utilities Branch is free. We are the place to go for information and knowledge-sharing for utilities around the globe. We are here and we want you!
Join the Utilities Branch!

Are you a member of a utility organization or a support organization to a utility? Then your organization is in high demand from the consumer's perspective! The consumer counts on utilities to provide the infrastructure and uninterrupted services for services, such as electrical power, natural gas, water and sewage. This consumer demand is truly 24/7, 365 days a year.

However, you are also in high demand for being part of such organization(s). The Utilities Branch of ASSE's Construction Practice Specialty met during Safety 2010 in Baltimore, MD this past June. ASSE members of the utility industry wanted to be sure you, as an ASSE member, are aware of the Utilities Branch. We are building our infrastructure from the ground up and would like you to consider being part of this organization.

We seek members who are involved in the utility industries to become Utilities Branch members to ensure that ASSE has a voice in this arena. Whether you are involved in a utility's operation, maintenance and/or the construction/repair of its infrastructure, we need your knowledge, experience, expertise and most of all, your voice.

We wish to promote the advancement of safety and health in utilities, to obtain a support network of professionals who can assist in solving utility-related concerns and issues, to promote best management practices prevalent in our industry, to collectively address current and pending regulatory changes that affect utility-related organizations and to be a voice that ASSE can depend on.

The View from a Camera Lens
By David Driver

How safe is your company when you are not around but the media is?

We are all in the business to protect our companies’ greatest national resource—employees. We conduct training sessions, audits, assessments, safety meetings, etc. to ensure that our employees understand safety requirements. These are not only our company safety requirements but also those of the regulatory bodies that govern us. But what happens when you are not around and the media is?

For some, this becomes a real or perceived failure of the safety program for the management team as well as for the safety professional. One such example is the photograph below:

In June 2010, the photograph was taken for the front page of a daily newspaper. The picture is of city workers unloading concrete culvert pipes. The picture clearly demonstrates the failure of a management/safety system where employee behaviors are not engrained or on automatic response when safe work behavior is desired. The news photographer’s purpose was not to show poor safety work practices, but the article addressed the declining benefits of city workers. The photographer wanted to show city workers on the job; however, more than that was captured through the lens.

A quick review of the picture raises the following questions:

- Have the employees been properly trained in safe rigging practices?
- Why is the employee under a suspended load?
- Are hardhats required?
- Is there a tag line needed for the load?

Most newspaper readers would not have noticed these issues. As safety professionals, photographs like these make us ask, “Could this photograph have been taken at our company?”
Sharing the View from a Camera Lens
Do you have a photograph that was taken in a utility environment that you would like to share with your colleagues? If you have photographs and a story behind it, share them with the Utilities Branch for possible publication.

We need to share our experiences and what is observed by us, our management team and the media. The forum is to showcase utility-related issues, achievements and best management practices.

So dust off your photos, write up your story and let the safety professionals of the Utilities Branch ponder.

What is Wrong with This Picture?
We have all seen pictures like these on the web, but do you have an original example? If so, please send it to us so we can share. We are interested in pictures from the utilities industry. Send pictures to Mark Hanke at mhanke@psgc-llc.com.

Name the Utilities Branch Newsletter!
As a new branch, we have a lot of work to do to reach and serve our members. I am in charge of our newsletter, and I would like your ideas. For starters, we need to come up with a name for our newsletter so if you have a suggestion, please let me know.

I am also looking for more articles for the newsletter and here again, your ideas are priceless. If you have a story to share or would like us to address a specific topic, let me know. Send your ideas to mhanke@psgc-llc.com.

Effective Safety Management:
Is It Magic?
By Carl Griffith

There is no magic to safety. It is management, just like you manage productivity, quality or any other part of your company.

Safety management, like any part of the organization, takes planning, organizing, leading, controlling and evaluating. You or your managers will be inspecting, investigating, recording, analyzing and reporting. How you make all this happen is through your safety program. The program gives you the policies, procedures and monitoring systems to make safety happen in your company.

Time and resources are in short supply in every company. Yours is no exception. Unless you have the budget to buy more people and more materials, you must approach every new program in a practical and effective manner.

To assure the successful implementation of your program, start with the basic questions:

- What are your safety goals?
- What can you realistically expect of your employees?
- How much time and money can be devoted to the safety program?
- What obstacles must be overcome?
- Can you win the commitment of upper management and employees?
An effective safety program is a comprehensive approach to help employees understand their responsibilities, establish good safety procedures and create systems for collecting the information and records required by OSHA. Your safety program should be built into pre-project planning and executed throughout every project to help you reduce or eliminate accidents that cause:

- Injuries and crashes
- Damage to property
- Fire or explosion
- Hazards to health
- Pollution
- Insurance claims

The components of an effective safety program should include:

1. A policy statement that includes management’s total commitment to safety signed by the top officer of the company.
2. Written goals and objectives of your safety program.
3. The efforts of management personnel as well as the participation and cooperation of all employees.
4. Task-specific training.
5. A procedure for measuring the effectiveness of the program and a method for enforcing the rules of the program.

Once you have structured your safety program to fit your company, safety responsibility and accountability must be assigned.

The next logical step is to translate those responsibilities into specific tasks and project activities. For example, who will be responsible for accident investigation and how will it be handled? Who will be responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard for your company? Who will be conducting toolbox talks?

A checklist provides a method of determining your company’s needs. That information will provide you with a solid foundation on which to build your company’s comprehensive safety program. Your company’s resources will dictate how you will get the job done. So is it management or magic?