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Volume 10, Issue 1

JANUARY 2010

Our Mission:
The American Society of Professional Estimators serves construction estimators by providing education, fellowship and opportunity for professional development.

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President's Pointer

Mike Alsgaard CPE



Well where do I start..... This year a lot has changed at the National level; new web site, new staff members and new affiliations with other organizations. But our chapter has **not** changed, we have the same old tried and true board members. We need to have some other ASPE members volunteer for the board to give fresh ideas on what program or tool box talks you all would like to see. We are always looking for articles for the newsletter, too. A couple of the board members will be going off the board this year so the chapter needs your help. Please consider volunteering and making a difference.

Also, I would like to let everybody know that we are going to be hosting the Fall 2010 Center Regional Meeting in late October, so if you have any ideas or would like to showcase a project you are working on, please contact Elizabeth or Matt Wing. Let's show our region what West Michigan is all about!

The National Convention this year in Grape Vine, Texas is also going to be a little different. We are currently looking at different programs and set ups for the three-day event. One change this year is that one of the class tracks' schedule for an entire day will be fellow CPE's teaching a two hour class on "How To Estimate The Cost Of." This will be a detailed look at how to estimate a certain component. I will have more information on this after March when we meet to discuss this more in detail. Until next time-

Projects normally start out with a cost per Square Foot Target. It is important to remember that the cost per square foot is derived as the end product of assembling an estimate not the beginning.

Jack C. Fuller, CPE



American Society of Professional Estimators Western Michigan Chapter October Tool Box Talk

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Program:

**Introduction to Polished
Concrete and Resinous
Flooring**

You are invited to attend the ASPE Western Michigan Chapter Tool Box Talk on Thursday, January 21st, 2010 : **Introduction to Polished Concrete and Resinous Flooring**



When:

**Thursday, Jan., 21, 2010
5:30pm — 7:30pm**

Topics to be covered:

Brief Presentation on what Venture Specialty Does.

Concrete Polishing System

Stained Concrete Polishing Systems

Industrial & Commercial Coating Systems

Dinner

Where:

**Venture Specialty Products
and Services
3303 Hudson Trails Dr.
Hudsonville, Mi**

Cost:

\$0 per person

Make reservations today! Reservations must be received by 4:00 pm, Tuesday 19th, 2010. Please make your reservation today by mail, fax (616) 949-6831 or emailing Elizabeth@grbx.com.

ASPE Western Michigan Chapter October Tool Box Talk—Polished Concrete

Mail reservations to:

**AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL
ESTIMATORS WESTERN MICHIGAN
CHAPTER 70**

4461 Cascade Rd. SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

Phone: 616-949-8650

Fax: 616-949-6831

E-mail: Elizabeth@grbx.com

Name of Attendee(s) (print clearly):

Signed

Company

West

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Please return to ASPE/GRBX office by January 19, 2010—Thank you!



**American Society of Professional Estimators (ASPE)
Western Michigan Chapter #70
Board of Directors Meeting**

Site Hosted by:



We are in the process of posting our monthly meeting notes on our web site for your viewing. Please stay tuned and keep looking for them.

<http://www.aspewmich.org/>

<http://www.grbx.com/>

Chapter Officers & Directors

President - Mike Alsgaard, CPE
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Program
Elizabeth Bovard Austhof
Builders Exchange

Dave Delpiere
CSM Group
Matt Wing, LEED AP
Wing Construction Services, LLC

Scholarship
Elizabeth Bovard Austhof
Builders Exchange

Newsletter
Mike Alsgaard, CPE
FTC&H

Estimating Academy
Elizabeth Bovard Austhof, Dave Delpiere & Matt Wing

Do you know any estimators out of work?

Keep in mind that the ASPE National website offers members who are out of work a place to showcase their resumes online. The National website can be found at:

http://www.aspenational.org/Employment_JobTarget.aspx

ASPE Membership

An accurate cost estimate is the first of many key components of a successful construction project. Plan interpretation, labor and material costs, scheduling costs, and level of difficulty recognition are a fraction of the skills necessary to become a successful estimator. Why join the American Society of Professional

Estimators? ASPE is the most recognized and credentialed group of construction cost professionals in our nation's construction industry. ASPE provides education, industry information, and fellowship to all levels of our members. It is made up of professionals of several different classifications.

-A- Estimator—shall have at least five years' experience as an estimator in one or more of the construction estimating disciplines.

-B- Constructor—shall be an active construction professional experienced in one or more of the construction disciplines with at least 5 years' experience.

-C- Associate Member—is a Member with less than 5 years of experience as an estimator or an active construction professional. When the Member achieves 5 years of experience, the Member shall be given one of the Member classifications listed above.

One of the ultimate goals of a member in ASPE is to achieve status as a "Certified Professional Estimator," otherwise know as "CPE." CPE status is recognized by Builders, Government Agencies, Developers, and many other Corporate entities as the highest level of qualification as an estimator. Educational training is available to become part of this elite group of professionals.



National News



The January edition of Estimating Today reminds us that national officer elections are coming up soon and nominations are being solicited and are due by midnight on 02/01/10



Have you heard we have two members of the society that have started there CPE process. Way to go Dave Delpiere and Bill Cox of CSM Group. If you see either one of them, wish them the best of luck.

Also check out the NEW ASPE National website : <http://www.aspenational.org/>

***Mark your calendar for the 2010
Annual Convention & Estimating
Academy in Grapevine, TX!***

July 7-10,2010 - Hilton DFW lakes



Tech Tips for the Estimating Profession

by Ed Wenz, E (Chapter 4) "thanks Ed"

This Month's Topic: **SYSTEM REFINEMENTS WHILE BUSINESS IS SLOW**

Many companies are experiencing slow periods within their estimating departments these days. As difficult as it is for many of us, this is an ideal time to refine your estimating processes while business is slow or, in some cases, while the estimating department size has been reduced. These system refinements include hardware and software updates, rebuilding or cleansing databases and spreadsheet templates, as well as additional training.

Evaluating the age of your systems and making sure your equipment is in good shape is a vital start. Even without replacement, there are many significant yet inexpensive upgrade options that should be considered. Some of these include driver and memory updates, Internet connectivity speed evaluation, basic registry cleansing, and hard drive defragmentation. Now is also a good time to evaluate available drive space needed for the upcoming year. A good rule of thumb for optimum performance is not to exceed 80% of your drive space. Is all your software up to date? Most estimating program users that keep their systems on annual support need not worry. The support typically provides one to two updates per year. Other programs such as Microsoft Office, Adobe Writer & Reader and, of course, your Anti-Virus programs, just to name a few, should be looked into. This may also be a good time to look into any add-on features that may be available for many of your regularly used programs.

Are your database-driven programs getting slow? Many databases can easily get oversized which will dramatically slow them down. Depending upon the program (check with the manufacturer), you can archive or delete portions of the data such as estimates. In some cases, it may be best to just start a new database for all projects starting after a given date. This is often more convenient for On-Screen Takeoff-type databases due to the maintaining of required links between the takeoffs and the image files. Also note that many databases typically need re-indexing and compacting (consult with your vendor or user manual).

How are your templates for spreadsheets, Word documents and the like? The excuse is that we are usually too busy to fix template issues when we find them. The truth is that it takes less time to fall back and go through these templates from top to bottom than to have every user correct the issue each time it's used, and that's if it is caught each time.

Is everyone in your department fully trained in all required software? Too often many basic features, let alone advanced features, are underutilized due to lack of instruction. With today's complexities of multiple file types, too many estimators lack the required knowledge of converting many of these file types into a usable format or to a reduced file size for easier use. If you don't have an in-house person capable of instructing the rest of your team, consider some of the available online training programs available from your software manufacturer or [Microsoft Help and How-to Home Page](#).



Schedule

Of

Event's



- January 6
ASPE Chapter 70 Board Meeting
7:30 AM — GRBX offices
- January 21
ASPE Chapter Meeting
Venture Specialty Products, Hudsonville, MI
- February 3
ASPE Chapter 70 Board Meeting
7:30 AM — GRBX offices
- March 3
ASPE Chapter 70 Board Meeting
7:30 AM — GRBX offices

JANUARY 2010

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Attention Members:

Keep ASPE Informed

If you (or your company) have information of interest to your estimating peers, please send it to Chapter 70. Looking for employee's, jobs acquired, completed, promotions, awards, etc.! Send your information to Mike Alsgaard at maalsgaard@ftch.com to be included in our next newsletter .



American Society of Professional Estimators Western Michigan Chapter 70

4461 Cascade Rd. SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

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Our Mission:

The American Society of Professional Estimators serves construction estimators by providing education, fellowship and opportunity for professional development.



ASPE Code of Ethics — Basic Canons

Canon #1 - Professional estimators shall perform services in areas of their discipline and competence.

Canon #2 - Professional estimators shall continue to expand their professional capabilities through continuing education programs to better enable them to serve clients, employers and the industry.

Canon #3 - Professional estimators shall conduct themselves in a manner, which will promote cooperation and good relations among members of our profession and those directly related to our profession.

Canon #4 - Professional estimators shall safeguard and keep in confidence all knowledge of the business affairs and technical procedures of an employer or client.

Canon #5 - Professional estimators shall conduct themselves with integrity as all times and not knowingly or willingly enter into agreements that violate the laws of the United States of America or of the states in which they practice. They shall establish guidelines for setting forth prices and receiving quotations that are fair and equitable to all parties.

Canon #6 - Professional estimators shall utilize their education, years of experience and acquired skills in the preparation of each estimate or assignment with full commitment to make each estimate or assignment as detailed and accurate as their talents and abilities allow.

Canon #7 - Professional estimators shall not engage in the practice of "bid peddling" as defined by this code. This is a breach of moral and ethical standards, and a member of this society shall not enter into this practice.

Canon #8 - Professional estimators and those in training to be estimators shall not enter into any agreement that may be considered acts of collusion or conspiracy (bid rigging) with the implied or express purpose of defrauding clients. Acts of this type are in direct violation of the Code of Ethics of the American Society of Professional Estimators.

Canon #9 - Professional estimators and those in training to be estimators shall not participate in acts, such as the giving or receiving of gifts, that are intended to be or may be construed as being unlawful acts of bribery.