

## NEWS BYTES

### IEEE-USA Study Projects Moderate Growth in EE Workforce:

The demand for all electrotechnology engineers will increase by 28 percent over the next decade, while demand for computer engineers, computer scientists and systems analysts will grow about 40 percent during the same period, according to an IEEE-USA study released in November 1997. The workforce forecast, developed by DRI/McGraw-Hill, used sophisticated economic input-output methodology to create more reliable projections than possible through impressions of current demand. While the IEEE-USA forecast shows that future needs will require additional electrotechnology professionals, the IEEE-USA Workforce Committee projects that the existing domestic workforce is capable of providing these additional workers. "Expanded continuing education programs are needed to equip the talent made available through downsizings, early retirements, mergers, acquisitions and migration from other fields to fill these new positions," said Workforce Committee Chair Shankar Lakhavani.

### IEEE-USA Backs Patent-Reform Bill:

In an Oct. 9 letter to Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, IEEE-USA endorsed the Omnibus Patent Act of 1997 (S.507). Wrote IEEE-USA Intellectual Property Committee Chair Daniel Fisher: "The bill provides our members with a strengthened patent system and arrives at a reasonable balance between inventor protection and public disclosure of technology. We believe that this balance will assist in promoting U.S. innovation and competitiveness." Fisher took special note of an S. 507 provision of an option for inventors to delay publication of their application until the patent is awarded, as long as they choose to file solely in the United States.

### IEEE-USA Endorses Doubling of Federal R&D:

The federal government should double its commitment to research and development over a 10-year period to secure the economic health and prosperity of the United States,

according to a statement released on Oct. 22, 1997, by a coalition of 106 science and engineering societies including IEEE-USA and the American Association of Engineering Societies. Dr. Ned Southoff (left), vice chair of IEEE-USA's Technology Policy Council, joined other society representatives and Senators Phil Gramm (center), R-Texas, Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., and Pete Domenici, R-N.M., at a U.S. Capitol news conference to unveil the statement. Gramm and Lieberman also announced legislation calling for increased federal investments in R&D.

— Christopher Currie, IEEE-USA Staff

For the latest news from IEEE-USA, see Perspectives' Web Extra at [www.ieee.org/usab/PERSPECTIVES](http://www.ieee.org/usab/PERSPECTIVES).

# IEEE★USA PERSPECTIVES

[www.ieee.org/usab/PERSPECTIVES](http://www.ieee.org/usab/PERSPECTIVES)

January 1998

News and Insights Relating to Professional Interests of U.S. Electrical, Electronics and Computer Engineers

## 1997 - The End of IEEE-USA?

# Past USAB Chair Reviews Our Transitional Year



**W**as 1997 the end of IEEE-USA as we know it? In a way, yes. This past year was our last one as IEEE United States Activities before changing into our new, more autonomous structure as IEEE United States of America in 1998.

As your last IEEE Vice President for Professional Activities and United States Activities Board (USAB) Chair, I had the unique opportunity to work with everyone across this organization during our transitional year. Now you can look forward to making the most of IEEE-USA with your new leaders: John R. Reinert as 1998 president; Paul Kostek as president-elect; Jerry Auldand and Frank Lord as members-at-large; Arthur Van Gelder as secretary-treasurer; and Michael R. Andrews, Jean Eason, Ned R. Southoff, Joseph V. Lillie, and Gerald Alphonse as vice presidents.

This year is also of great personal significance to IEEE-USA, since we celebrate a special anniversary: it marks exactly 25 years since the IEEE amended its Constitution to add the professional role to our Institute, leading to the creation of USAB.

As we look ahead, let's consider our activities during 1997:

### ★ Industry Outreach Lays Groundwork for Partnerships

One of the initiatives I stressed in 1997 was the development of closer ties with industry. Using the state of Virginia as a test case, I attended its second Technology Summit and met with leaders of the Northern Virginia Technology Council and staff of the Potomac Knowledgeway.

High technology councils of companies exist across all U.S. cities, municipalities and states. Efforts to reach out to them can prove fruitful for us, so we are now looking to identify areas of mutual concern and work to get local IEEE sections, councils, and consultants' networks involved, and to grow these partnership activities all across the country.

### ★ IEEE-USA Thinks Outside the Box

In 1997, we also got the ball rolling on an idea that was born in 1995, when we found that no trade magazine or journal devoted editorial content regularly and exclusively to enhancing engineers' careers. After careful planning and production during this past year, IEEE-USA is now publishing *Today's Engineer*.

The 48-page quarterly magazine, which debuts this month, is devoted exclusively to the professional lives of engineers in all technical fields. With Gus Gaynor as editor-in-chief, backed by a mostly volunteer-driven editorial board, we're counting on *Today's Engineer* to help your career, and — with your paid subscriptions — establish a significant new revenue source for IEEE-USA.

### ★ Committees' Work Places IEEE-USA in Spotlight

As usual, our many volunteers worked throughout the year on programs, services and publications to benefit all members. Here's a sample:

- The Professional Activities Committee for Engineers once again held a successful Professional Activities Conference, this time in St. Petersburg, Fla.;
- Our IEEE-USA Job Listing Service (JLS), which is now averaging 1,000 queries per day from job seekers, underwent changes to make it even better, including adding an Entry-Level JLS;
- The Employment Assistance Committee published the *Engineer's Guide to Lifelong Employability*, a valuable career-guidance resource;

- Working with a broad coalition representing business organizations, educational institutions and engineering societies, the Engineering Employment Benefits Committee realized a major legislative priority in the 105th Congress: the enactment of legislation that expands access by middle-income Americans to tax-favored Individual Retirement Accounts as part of the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997. The committee also helped to establish a new coalition to promote further pension portability improvements;
- The Precollege Education Committee increased its efforts to publicize its important goals, and USAB began working with the IEEE's Educational Activities Board and other groups on a precollege education workshop on technical literacy to take place this year;
- IEEE-USA's Alliance of IEEE Consultants' Networks published, for the second year, its national directory and established a searchable database on the Web; and
- The Surveys Committee published the 1997 IEEE U.S. Member Salary and Fringe Benefit Survey with a new format, which had stronger sales than expected, and published a salary workbook that allows readers to use the regression analysis from the Survey to generate estimates of compensation from their peers.

### ★ Tech Policy Symposium Brings Attention to Hot Issue

IEEE-USA held a successful 1997 Technology Policy Council Symposium in June. The event, on the role of government in restructuring the electric power industry, attracted target audiences, including government officials and staff. It received good press coverage, and exceeded attendance and revenue projections.

### ★ Intellectual Property Works to Protect Inventors

The IEEE-USA Intellectual Property Committee, in written testimony and meetings with key staff, was successful in having language added to a proposed patent reform bill. With that language, inventors who file only in the United States would not have to publish their patent application until the patents are actually awarded. Previous versions of the legislation would have mandated publication 18 months after the patent was filed whether or not the patent had been issued. The bill, under consideration, may go directly to the Senate for a floor vote.

### ★ IEEE-USA Leadership in AAES Comes Closer to Home

In the past, the IEEE President served as the IEEE's voting representative on the American Association of Engineering Societies (AAES) Board of Governors. But this year, thanks to the efforts of IEEE Past President Chuck Alexander, Executive Director Dan Senese and staff, our new IEEE-USA President will assume responsibility for serving as the IEEE's AAES Governor (with IEEE Executive Director Dan Senese as the other IEEE/AAES Governor). This change in representation will properly reflect the fact that you as U.S. members pay the assessment for belonging to AAES.

### ★ Coming Next: A Celebration!

During this "new and improved" year when we also celebrate our 25th birthday, be on the lookout for special events and projects that will highlight two and a half decades of IEEE-USA.

Meanwhile, I want to thank all those volunteers and staff who made my tenure both enjoyable and rewarding. I feel fortunate that I do not have to cut any of my ties with either staff or volunteers, since I will continue to serve IEEE-USA this year as Past Chair.

— Daniel Benigni, 1997 USAB Chair

