

# SPED Newsletter

Published by the  
Society of Piping Engineers and Designers  
**Spring 2003**

---

## ***SPED Annual Meeting Highlights Accomplishments, Certification***

The Society of Piping Engineers and Designers (SPED) annual meeting highlighted several major FY2002 accomplishments and several new directions for FY2003. In FY2002, SPED funded a major upgrade to its website, upgraded its plant modeling laboratory at University of Houston Downtown and held multiple sessions of its highly regarded professional development courses. Plans discussed for the upcoming year include further website improvements and course offerings plus a possible offering of a certification program for certain skills. SPED's Fiscal Year (FY) ends in August. The annual meeting was held at Houston Engineering and Scientific Society in November.

The meeting featured a talk, "Automation of Front-End Plant Design," by Paul Cesak of Design Power. Paul spoke on how automated routing tools are allowing designers to optimize plant layout by testing alternatives using a rapidly created and fully routed 3D plant model.

In the bidding, front-end, and early detailing phases, Design Power's own product, PlantWise, has demonstrated dramatic reductions in total installed cost and project schedule. Paul finished his presentation with a demonstration of PlantWise, in which he quickly re-routed plant piping after making modifications. Design Power ([www.dp.com](http://www.dp.com)) is a Corporate Member of SPED.

## **Prior Year Results**

SPED President Vic Robson, ABB Lummis reviewed the prior year and future plans. Mr. Robson said that, "SPED courses were well attended, with Plant Layout having 31 students and Intergraph PDS having 46 students." SPED has trained thousands of Houston professionals over the years.

"In addition," said Robson, "the SPED PDS Lab software was upgraded to PDS version 7.0." SPED purchased and maintains the PDS Lab at the University of Houston Downtown where UHD students are trained for university credit,



**Paul Cesak Discusses the Future of Plant Design Automation**

while SPED offers industrial level training for local professionals. It is the only PDS 3<sup>rd</sup> party training available in Houston.

SPED video tapes are also selling well. "We sold 2 sets of our Plant Layout and 2 sets of the B31.3 tapes," he said.



**SPED President Vic Robson  
Outlines Plans for FY 2003**

SPED has poured considerable money into its website, [www.spedweb.com](http://www.spedweb.com), trying to offer more features for its members. "We set up a special, members-only area," said Wayne Dolbec, SPED Webmaster. "Once testing is completed, you'll need a password to get in."

These investments in training and member benefits have been costly. Bill Beazley, SPED

Executive Director/Treasurer, said that, "In FY2002, SPED lost \$33,081 on revenues of \$ 107,367." Dr. Beazley discussed a number of steps he is taking to reduce the shortfall.

**The Year Ahead**

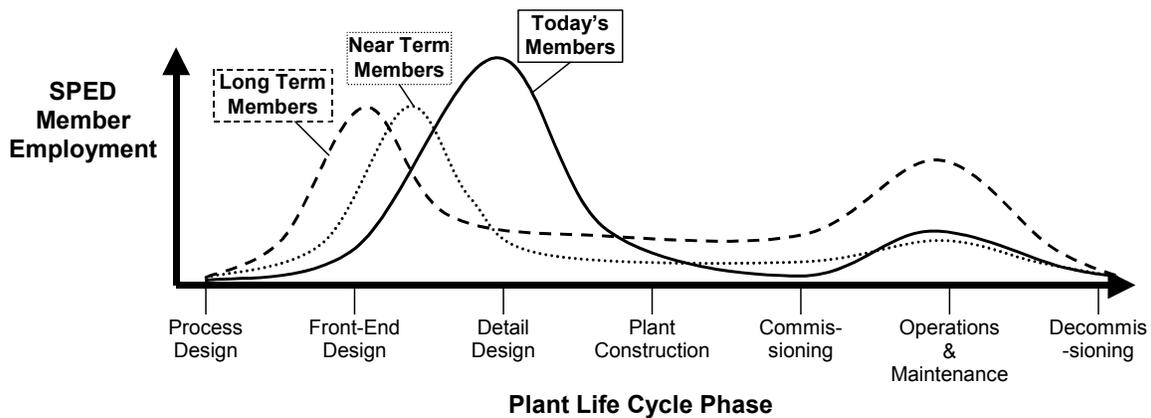
Vic Robson reported on the plans for the year ahead. "The target SPED member is Equally attractive to Petrochemical Plant Engineer, Constructor, Operator and Maintainer. Hi is someone involved with plant mechanical integrity throughout the plant life cycle."



**SPED Members: Equally Attractive  
to Plant Engineer, Constructor,**

This means a shift in where SPED members are employed. "They will come more from the owner-operator and plant maintenance personnel," Robson said. Robson showed a diagram that showed how the distribution of members is expected to change.

Robson said that SPED is planning to offer its courses as usual. "These courses continue to be



**Expected Change in SPED Membership**

a bargain compared to traveling to Huntsville,” Robson said. Prices have increased because of higher promotional costs and increase market saturation in Houston.

Robson said the SPED Board of Directors is considering a new member program, Certification, that is expected to improve the employability and compensation of those who qualify. Robson said, “certification documents a person’s skills and as the certification program gets recognized, the whole profession will benefit.” Certification is expected to start with the Plant Layout program already being offered by SPED.



SPED Board of Directors Consider the Merits of Certification

In the discussion that followed, many members were enthusiastic about certification but concerned by the need for recognition. Robson said that much effort will be devoted to promoting the certification with potential employers.

---

### ***ACS Says Jobs for Chemists Down***

The employment market for chemists deteriorated sharply over the past year, says Chemical and Engineering News, published by the American Chemical Society. For chemists already in the workforce, the salary situation remained quite strong.

The unemployment rate for chemists rose sharply in 2002. According to the ACS's 2002 survey of the salary and employment status of its members in the domestic workforce (C&EN, Aug. 5, page 37), 3.3% of them were unemployed but seeking employment as of March 1 of this year. This is the highest rate measured since ACS started surveying its members on an annual and fairly consistent basis more than 30 years ago. And it is up starkly from

the 1.5% unemployment rate measured as of March 1, 2001 (C&EN, Aug. 20, 2001, page 51)-which was the lowest rate in a decade.

In terms of salaries, the data are considerably more positive. According to the 2002 salary and employment survey, the median base salary of ACS chemist members with full-time jobs in the domestic workforce as of March 1 this year was \$76,500, almost 5% higher than it was a year earlier. Chemists at all three degree levels posted sizable gains.

According to ACS's latest (one year old) starting salary survey for new chemistry graduates (C&EN, March 18, page 51), the median full-time salary for 2000–01 chemistry Ph.D. graduates, as of the week of Oct. 8, 2001, was \$70,000, about 8% higher than the \$65,000 posted by the year-earlier class. The master's class did almost as well with about a 7% year-to-year gain, from \$45,000 to \$48,000. The median for new 2000–01 bachelor's graduates, \$33,600, was down slightly from the year-earlier \$34,000 for the 1999–2000 class.

For more information, consult: <http://pubs.acs.org/cen/coverstory/8047/8047employment2.html>

---

### ***12 Things to Do if You are Laid Off***

Engineers and Designers both know that Capital Expenditure projects are like wars: When the battle is clearly won, the soldiers are sent home to do something else. So what should you do if you are laid off?

1. **Ask for a recommendation.** Most employers are willing to do almost anything to soften the blow of a layoff. This is the perfect time to get your accomplishments on record.
2. **Write two resumes.** One if you stay if this field and one for your best case, alternate career.
3. **Take a friend to lunch.** Networking is the best way to find a new job.
4. **Call your last boss.** If you left your last job on good terms, there is a chance they might want you back.
5. **Workout at the health club.** Be sure to stay in shape while you look for your next

### Job Listing

Principal Technical Services (PTS) is a major source of talent to the entire Petrochemical industry in California; thus we are seeking updated resumes from experienced Piping Designers with AutoCAD and Microstation experiences. Specifically, we are seeking candidates with experiences in:

- ❑ Layout of detailed piping to pressure vessels, pumps, and skid mounted equipment. Evaluate and design considering process flow, thermal expansion, supports, vibration, and fabrication.
- ❑ Field walkdowns to measure existing equipment and piping for modifications. Design piping and new equipment installations to fit for quick turnaround installations in existing facilities.

Preference for graduates of piping related courses from the Society of Piping Engineers & Designers, such as: Plant Layout and Piping Design, Intergraph PDS I, Intergraph PDS II, Intergraph PDS III or ASME B31.3 Code

Please send PTS an update resume in WORD format via email to: [jobs@PTSstaffing.com](mailto:jobs@PTSstaffing.com)

opportunity. Working out makes you feel good too.

6. **Cut the grass.** Get dressed every day and do something constructive.
7. **Go online.** There are still jobs in piping listed online. Try [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com), [www.ceweekly.com](http://www.ceweekly.com) and [www.spedweb.com](http://www.spedweb.com).
8. **Pack your bags.** Be willing to work in another city, where there might be more jobs.
9. **Put on your hard hat.** The plant you just designed will be fabricated and erected. These firms might need extra help and your knowledge might be an advantage.
10. **Put on your NOMEX.** Petrochemical plants are continually being maintained and reworked and there is a modest but steady demand for help on-site.
11. **Go to school.** Consider a two or four

### 2002 SPED Corporate Members

SPED acknowledges and appreciates the support of the following **Corporate Members** in 2002.

1. **ABB Lummus Global, Inc.**
2. **CAD Centre, Inc.**
3. **COADE Engineering Software, Inc.**
4. **Design Power, Inc.**
5. **Dow Chemical, Inc.**
6. **Halliburton Kellogg Brown & Root, Inc.**
7. **Kvaerner Process, Inc.**
8. **Research Engineers International, Inc.**
9. **Southwest Design Services, Inc.**
10. **Technip-Coflexip, Inc.**
11. **University of Houston-Downtown.**
12. **Washington Group International, Inc.**

year program to get new skills while you wait for the recession to blow over. If you lack a degree, consider the four-year Piping Design Technology program at [www.uhd.edu](http://www.uhd.edu) or your local community college.

12. **File for Unemployment.** Unless you agreed otherwise, your taxes should work for you now. In Texas, call the local Texas Workforce Commission office or go online at <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/>

### About SPED

The Society of Piping Engineers and Designers (SPED) is only professional organization devoted exclusively to the betterment of Plant Design Professionals. It advances the profession through publications, training and other professional development activities.

This publication is mailed free of charge to all SPED members. Annual individual membership dues are \$35 for professionals, and \$20 for full time students. Corporate memberships for companies with fewer than 75 employees are \$300 per year (includes 3 individual memberships). Corporate memberships for companies with 75 or more employees are \$500 per year (includes eight individual memberships).

### SPED Board of Directors

**President:** Vic Robson, ABB Lummus Global, Inc.

**Executive Vice-President:** Jack Belden, GDS Engineering, Inc.

**Vice-Presidents:** Terry McCormick, Piping Technology & Products, Inc., Alan Cooper, Piping Technology & Products, Inc., Ernie Gigliotti, Dow Chemical, Inc.

**Executive Director/Treasurer:** William G. Beazley, President, Information Assets Inc.

**Web master & Director:** Mr. Wayne Dolbec, Technip-Coflexip, Inc.

**Directors:** Haku Israni, Test Masters Educational Services  
Ed Sheinberg, UH-Downtown  
Rakesh Agrawal, Piping Technology & Products, Inc.

David Diehl, COADE Engineering

Barry Doyle, Kvaerner Process

Ruben Guzman, Consultant