

Monthly round-up of news from the Institute of Highway Engineers



FOCUS

CIC report highlights barriers to more women joining industry

The record of employing and retaining women in the construction industry is poor, and to encourage companies to change, the CIC (Construction Industry Council) has launched a report highlighting the issues facing businesses in competing effectively in an increasingly-diverse employment marketplace. The report includes best practice case studies from Mott MacDonald, among others, on women-friendly practice.

Although the construction professional services performed far better than the industry as a whole, the percentage of female employees has only improved at the rate of 1% in three years – just 23% of the 270,000 people employed are

female. Other high-pressure professional sectors do much better in providing a more appropriate life-work balance, and attract a greater number of highly-motivated women.

The report outlines five key recommendations:

- *develop the talent pipeline* – more role models in the industry are needed to actively partner with schools and higher education institutions to encourage careers in the built environment

- *develop emotional intelligence* – this is a core skill for leading collaborative teams and one which women can demonstrate more than men

- *create diverse teams and networks* – to improve your innovation

- *create agile workplaces* – adopting flexible working is key to greater company agility and attracting and retaining women

- *create inclusive cultures* – women have long considered the cultures of built environment firms as being masculine with long hours which are not family friendly.

Graham Watts, CEO of CIC, said: 'We work in an increasingly multi-cultural environment. It makes sound business sense to not only employ women professionals, but put in place working practices and fair policies in recruitment, career development and promotion which are inclusive for all staff.'

Engineers must heed new Bill

Engineers will be significantly affected by the forthcoming Flood and Water Management Bill, currently going through Parliament. Highlights include:

- from 2011, permeable paving, swales or French drains must take the place of traditional drainage in all new developments

- unitary and county authorities will be required to act as SUDS Approval Bodies (SABs), adopting and maintaining all new SUDS schemes

- highway drainage, in general,

must use SUDS, applying new standards, which will be developed by 2011. The standards provide the basis for approval, adoption and correction to the public sewer. Authorities will be able to charge for a SUDS consent.

A few authorities have already published SUDS guidance for new developments, and Lamb Drove in Cambridgeshire is being monitored with a view to contributing to the new Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs standards envisaged.

IHE in action

- Training budgets are severely curtailed, yet skills are being lost through retirements. Recognising that members still need to upskill, the institute is offering all members one course or conference at half-price during 2010.

- IHE's spring courses include an introduction to transport development management – the planning legislation, the role of DC staff and a legal briefing from a barrister. The second course, in May, is on traffic sign design at intermediate level – a refresher in sign design and strategy

and strategy from the Department of Transport and leading experts.

Other courses in development cover asset management and basic highway engineering.

- With the change of name, IHE's flyers and forms have been redesigned and we can supply a power-point for local office presentations. Contact Sandy Lopes for copies.

- The annual dinner will be held on 18 June on Winchester following a Southern branch seminar. Steve Spender, Hants CC is to be installed as president at the AGM.

MEMBER PROFILE: Josie Healy, FIHE

Josie Healy is currently engaged in helping make a success of the major new asset management initiative within Denbighshire CC. It is a co-operative piece of work with Conwy BC, under a joint head of service.

Where joint working makes good sense, it is undertaken, and the first project is for Denbighshire's highways and infrastructure department, to adopt the proven successful IT approach to asset management developed by Conwy.

The two authorities will use the same server and software, which means uploading the entire asset database in a way compatible with the demands of this system.

Data has to be thoroughly cleaned, and content standardised, beginning with street works, which are already in a standard format, and will go on through everything else. 'Not quite a job for life, but a very large challenge.' A challenge which Ms Healy believes will deliver a very cost-effective outcome, however.

Ms Healy finds the challenge 'exciting, as it is part of a move towards partnership working that will benefit everybody, both financially and

transportation management engineer: Denbighshire CC



by increasing efficiency.' She believes IHE must work hard to keep necessary spending on roads and safety up, so that everyone can benefit from such improvements.

Ms Healy started work in a drawing office, and

she found she needed more traffic data when producing feasibility study drawings. This led to her interest in data collection and interpretation, 'and, she says, 'in effect, my career chose me'. Local government reorganisation in 1996 split Clwyd, her employer, into four, and she became the specialist in traffic accident studies for Denbighshire.

An increase in motorcycle accidents across North Wales led her to carry out a large-scale exercise to find its root causes. When it emerged that the accidents mainly involved local people, not – as expected – tourists, she worked to create a free Bike Safe course for all local residents. This, with an added 'First aid day', has been of 'great value in reducing injuries and improving the skills of the motorcycling community'. It is a contribution Ms Healy is 'most proud of'.

She thinks membership of IHE 'recognises professionalism, and provide a network of knowledgeable, friendly people. This is important in furthering a career and marketing one's skills'.

Also, as she says: 'We will always need roads – it's a good career choice'.

What's in site

New sections on IHE's website aim to keep visitors up-to-date and point to useful resources.

- The 'Knowledge network' has a page on parking, with links to presentations from Essex, Kent and Dorset at IHE's parking debate on standards for residential parking in new developments.

- The 'Maintenance' pages list the recent spate of Department for Transport proposals.

- On a more light-hearted note, the 'Members' area noticeboard carries news of member's exploits and holiday accommodation in Norfolk and Austria.

Are you ready for the new regime?

IHE's Development Management Group has arranged a special seminar in London on 21 April to brief engineers on their options and reviewing emerging good practice.

☎: <http://theihe.org/knowledge-network/development-control/drainage/>

New CDM and travel planning courses

- The award in *Construction (Design and Management) Regulations* provides the knowledge required to meet the legal requirements of the CDM regulations. It is a three-unit qualification with mandatory overview unit, mandatory guidance tool unit and a specialist unit chosen from a range of options. ☎: www.open.ac.uk/ouab/p2_5.shtml

- The level 5 Certificate in Travel Planning provides specific professional skills in travel plan development, social marketing and designing surveys. ☎: www.open.ac.uk/ouab/p2_4.shtml

Exhibition has everyone talking

An exhibition telling the story of Leicestershire's roads and transport, and entitled 'Taking to the roads' has begun a tour of Leicestershire museums. The exhibition looks at the history of the county's roads, from prehistoric times through Roman road building, to present day transport themes such as road safety and public transport. It is supported by Tarmac.



A decade of achievement 'but disparities remain'

To mark the 10-year anniversary of the Tomorrow's Roads road safety strategy, the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) has published a report evaluating road safety in the UK, a decade on.

The report concludes that casualty reduction targets for Great Britain were met by the end of 2008, and the achievements should be recognised. But so, too, should the disparities, inequalities and difficulties within road

safety. Looking ahead, casualty reduction has not been consistent across user profile, type, behaviour or location, and the quality of data collection is suspect.

The next strategy needs to combine headline targets and high-level strategy approaches with structures which allow road safety delivery partners to establish more sophisticated internal targets and provide research and guidance to support them.

Maintenance consultations from Department of Transport

- Changes to the inspection code of practice and the inspection fees regime, with the aim of improving the quality of workmanship. Deadline 24 May 2010.

- Amendments to the street works regulations to increase the charges

for works which overrun on traffic sensitive streets. Deadline 25 May 2010.

- Safety at street works and road works code of practice to apply to local authorities, as well as utilities. The changes to the 'red

book' include higher standards for equipment, – such as safety barriers and high-visibility jackets, greater provision for disabled people and improved consistency with other legislation. Deadline 2 June 2010.

training & development

● Preparing for your review

14 April, London, WC1

20 May, Taunton

In-depth advice and support in going for CEng, IEng and EngTech.

● Introduction to development control

15 April, Leeds

Start here for newcomers to DC.

An overview of planning law and policy, and the role of highway development control staff.

● Are you ready to sink or swim?

21 April, London

The Flood and Water Management Bill explained for DC engineers, and emerging practice identified.

● Traffic signal control

26–28 April 2010 (residential)

University of Nottingham

IHE's annual course for signal engineers on implementation and maintenance.

Cost £945. Invoices can be dated pre or post-April 2010.

● Improving your skills in traffic signing

11 May, London

Course to maintain expertise in direction and warning signing. Supported by Department for Transport.

diary dates

● Reclaiming our rural highways

2 July, Hexham, Northumberland

● Annual development control conference

18 May, London

● Traffic signs conference and exhibition

September, Loughborough

● Transport development control

Six-day foundation course

14–16 September, and 7–9

December 2010