

# Utah Seismic Safety Commission

Meeting  
July 18, 2003

## Minutes

On July 18, 2003 a regularly scheduled quarterly meeting of the Utah Seismic Safety Commission was held at the State Office Building, Salt Lake City, Utah. Chairman Barry Welliver called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

### **Members Present:**

-Rick Allis	Utah Geological Survey
-Walter J. Arabasz	U of U Seismograph Stations
-Scott Behunin	Utah Division of Emergency Services/DPS
-Don E. Bush	Utah House of Representatives
-Carl Eriksson	Utah League of Cities & Towns
-Michael Keene	State Science Advisor, Governor's Office of Planning & Budget
-Peter W. McDonough	American Society of Civil Engineers
-Matthias Mueller	Utah Division of Facilities Construction & Management
-Dave Nazare	Utah Department of Transportation
-Barry Smith	Western Mountain Region, American Inst. of Architect
-Barry H. Welliver	Chair, Structural Engineers Association of Utah

### **Members Not Present:**

Jake Arslanian	American Public Works Association
Kerry Baum	Association of Contingency Planners
Doug Bausch	Federal Emergency Management Agency (Ex-Officio)
Cathy Howick	Utah Insurance Department
Peter C. Knudson	Utah State Senate
Mark Petersen	U.S. Geological Survey (Ex-Officio)

### **CEM Staff Present:**

-Bob Carey	Operations & Natural Hazards Section, DES
-Amisha Lester	Operations & Natural Hazards Section, DES
-Capt. Keith Squires	Deputy Director, DES

**UGS Staff Present:**

-Francis Ashland                      Geologic Hazards Program, Utah Geological Survey  
-Gary Christenson                      Geologic Hazards Program, Utah Geological Survey

**Guests Present/Committee Members:**

-Jeff Behr                                  Orion Monitoring  
-Dawn Black                                SLC Emergency Management  
-Kiry Bodily                                 South Summit Middle School  
-Flora Hardy                                South Summit Middle School  
-Jim Higbee                                 UDOT-Legacy Parkway Team  
-John Pollard                                Safe-T-Proof Utah  
-Susan Stever                                SLC Emergency Management  
-Staci Williams                              South Summit Middle School  
-Tamyra Williams                          South Summit Middle School  
-Jane Zhang                                 USOE

**I. Election of Chair and Co-Chair**

Representative Don Bush led us through the process of electing our new leadership for the coming year. Barry Welliver was elected chair and the position of co-chair was expanded to include Peter McDonough and Rick Allis as vice-chairs.

**II. Information Items**

- *WSSPC.* Rick Allis spoke about the upcoming annual conference and the award nomination of the Salt Lake City School District's "Non-Structural Hazard Mitigation Handbook". Also mentioned was the need to prepare for next year's national convention and selecting worthy award nominations.
- *UGS Staff Change.* Gary Christenson will replace Francis Ashland as staff for USSC from the Utah Geologic Survey. Thanks to Frank for all his hard work and welcome Gary.
- *Funds Transfer.* Bob Carey indicated that the USSC funding has been effectively transferred to the Division of Emergency Services from the Utah Geological Survey. Rick Allis asked if there was now a line item in the DES budget and Bob Carey indicated he would find out.
- *ANSS Funding Update.* Walter Arabasz reported that the House has restored the \$2 million cut in the proposed \$3.9 million budget. Noting that this is still woefully below the original authorization of \$35 million per year, he indicated the Senate mark could be as high as \$4.4 million in the upcoming debate. No new instruments are planned for Utah beyond those previously authorized.

### **III. Student Research Report**

The students of North Summit Middle School together with their teacher presented a report on their visit to the Hebgen Lake area to study the historic earthquake in that area. The group noted the formation of Earthquake Lake and the surrounding destruction. (August 17th, 1959 - 11:30 PM)

As part of their outreach, they created earthquake backpack kits for distribution to the various classrooms in their school. This was in recognition of the need to raise the awareness of Utahans to be prepared.

The group deftly fielded questions from the commission about their learning experience. It was noted that they had done a fine job, and this being the first report of the jointly sponsored Student Research Program, the commission was happy to see good results.

Rick Allis pointed out that the opportunity to view a major trenching operation near Mapleton will exist into September. This could be a potential news media event and the commission may want to pursue developing a statement or news release in conjunction with others.

### **IV. Implementing the Vision.**

Barry Welliver introduced the meeting's theme by briefly commenting on three potential areas of discussion.

- *Image Is Everything.* Our Strategic Plans portray a commission confident in its recommendations and active in its pursuit of accomplishing the work of those plans. Building an image readily associated, as an authoritative voice on earthquake safety in the state should be a priority.
- *Success Stories.* There are a variety of examples to help formulate a program to build a documentation library. California's Annual Report and Earthquake Risk Management: Mitigation Success Stories are aimed at keeping the stories alive in the minds of those affected by and responsible for earthquake safety.
- *"Business" Strategy.* Developing a mission statement, which accurately reflects the priorities and interests of the commission, is crucial to creating a business plan.

Rick Allis noted the importance of the need to keep repeating the message. He used examples of warnings given in the Santaquin area, as a reminder that unheeded messages doesn't negate the risk. In addition to proclaiming the problem, it is necessary to be ready to respond.

Scott Behunin felt the idea of an annual report card, short and sweet, would be a good way of keeping on track. Educating students and the public with information similar to the brochures created after the Nisqually earthquake.

Dave Nazare asked how we measure progress. Perhaps there are just a few items each year, but they should be important to the priorities set by the commission.

A business SWOT analysis (**S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats) was put forth as a possible tool to help the commission evaluate its effectiveness and improve its vision and priorities.

Barry Smith emphasized the need to be collaborators with other agencies and to utilize educational opportunities when they exist.

It was agreed that it is the commission's job to bring the available information on earthquake safety to the users. Programs such as the Utah Capitol Restoration should be continually endorsed, and follow-through by the commission should remain a priority.

Rep. Don Bush reminded the commission that the legislature is a vehicle to help protect the interests of the public. Keeping in mind the importance of the message, it is indeed a charge of the commission to propose appropriate legislation where it sees fit.

Walter Arabasz shared his wisdom about the "earthquake problem" by recognizing two observations. First, that it will take an earthquake, flood, or other disaster to get the public attention needed to make great strides in safety. This has been the path for most of the state's progress and recognizing and being prepared for that possible event is necessary. And secondly, that it is necessary to take the long-term view of the problem. Picking and choosing the "fights" is smarter than expending energies in all directions.

Scott Behunin asked, "How big of an insurance policy do you want?" Without the knowledge of the earthquake threat, nothing will most probably happen. Rick Allis relayed his personal experience with replacement of a hot water heater in his home. The installer suggested that these heaters are "almost never" braced to the surrounding walls. This, in spite of the Utah law requiring such anchorage (Utah Uniform Buildings Standards Acts Rules R156-56-707 Statewide Amendments to the IPC, item (20)), was deemed fundamental knowledge that should be readily available and recognized by the consuming public and professional organizations.

The big-ticket items of seismic rehabilitation most probably won't be done without first hand knowledge of the danger. The smaller steps, however, like bolting and strapping water heaters, can be accomplished with nominal costs and achieve great return on investment.

While remaining an advocate towards individuals is necessary, Walter Arabasz suggested a healthy focus be made toward government and other public entities. This is the arena where officials have a public responsibility to lead in matters of earthquake safety.

Barry Welliver started a general discussion about the issue of school construction. He suggested that the commission might choose to look at the present responsibilities and comment upon the possible need for revamping or improving the present system. Given that the construction of school buildings is presently administered by an entity that might benefit from an outside review, it seemed appropriate to pursue some study.

Carl Eriksson commented on the present “value engineering” studies performed by the school districts and suggested following up on the commission’s successful venture into recommending a 90% seismic review for school buildings. Matthias Mueller felt there is a need to align interests with the American Institute of Architects, the Engineers Council, and others involved in the building and construction industry. Providing recognition and sponsoring possible fund-raising events were among his suggestions.

Barry Smith noted his experience with school construction in the larger school districts would lead him to the conclusion that they are doing a good job. Inspectors are ICBO certified and the various facilities departments have dedicated and experienced individuals working on projects.

Peter McDonough focused on the need to follow through with any studies or reports with the news media. Identifying successes as well as needs could help solidify the commission’s identity.

Guest John Pollard relayed a story about consulting with an administrator of the University of Utah Hospital on possible non-structural mitigation projects. When quizzed about the susceptibility of the hospital to the effects of a large earthquake, he was surprised to learn that this administrator was unaware of the University’s own wealth of information in this area. This seems to underscore the need to get pertinent information into the hands of decision-makers. One such tool cited was the California Earthquake Risk Management document: A Toolkit for Decision-Makers (Proposition 122 Product 2.2).

Bob Carey suggested that the commission might look at requesting various agencies to come before the commission in an effort to uncover the facts and help clarify the needs. Risk management personnel should be accountable for decision-making. It was suggested that a potential program of auditing the progress of school district’s compliance with regulations might help put this in perspective. Finding and endorsing the successful endeavors may help build alliances and open the door to broader solutions.

Walter Arabasz suggested backing up one step before taking a shotgun approach to specific problems. He suggested developing a matrix approach to help quantify the problem. Beginning with a premise such as “reduce loss of life and destruction, it would seem appropriate to see where the biggest contributors are. Taking a more objective look at the earthquake problem may lead to some formulation, which could be a useful tool in prioritizing specific actions.

## **Lunch Break**

A discussion was held regarding the potential need to extend the commission's regular meeting time. It was decided that this extra time would be useful if it was productive and needed. Providing materials beforehand for commissioner's review would help facilitate a "get-right-to-it" atmosphere. Meetings from 9:00AM extending to noon (if needed) were agreed to.

Barry Welliver suggested the remaining portion of the meeting be devoted to focusing on the work of implementing our various discussion points so far. It was seen as potentially establishing our agenda items for the next USSC meeting in October.

Scott Behunin suggested that the "new leadership" should take on the job of establishing the agenda based on our discussions today and work to be done before the next meeting.

The following programs were established as work items for the commission:

## **Parse the Earthquake Problem**

Walter Arabasz expressed a desire to work on the distillation of the strategic plan. He characterized this as a matrix, which would help "parse the earthquake problem" and therefore help set priorities. Such a process could give rise to specific "we want you to..." Statements, which the commission could use to promote causes tied to its strategic plan. An example would be if a focus of the commission's work is to help prevent life and dollar losses, then a small step in this direction would be to suggest that "we want you to have a 72 hour kit.

It was suggested that a subset of the full commission would work on this matrix of ideas and bring it before the entire commission for emphasis and direction. Several commissioners volunteered to be a part of this special study group in addition to the chair and vice-chairs.

Envision Utah was cited as an example program within the state, which has a framework for a vision and an information-gathering basis to help build consensus ideas.

## **Public Relations/Public Image**

Polishing our image and establishing a consistent look-and-feel to our published information are suggestions Barry Welliver will spearhead. Using examples such as the recent UGS/USSC brochure "Which Map Do I Use?" and the "Non-Structural Bracing Guidelines" by the Salt Lake City school district (and as modified by the California Seismic Safety Commission), the task is seen as developing templates and other graphic tools to be used for future communications of the commission.

### **SWOT Marketing / Business Plan**

The need to re-energize our mission statement was deemed integral to pulling together the many new ideas and visions expressed for our commission. Using typical business tools to assess progress and identify needs, this work will help build a foundation for the next platform upon which the commission will stand. The need to evaluate our progress in light of our extended life as a commission was seen as an exercise to help keep fit. Tasking ourselves to regularly review our development will keep our goals in view.

At the close of the meeting two guests offered the following observations:

- Using an experience such as the hot water bracing issue, the commission would be well advised to identify some small issue each meeting and publicize its position. Perhaps a “USSC recommends..... and this is why” declaration would keep positive messages before the public and others and help establish the commission as a viable source for this kind of information.
- The schools regularly meet in conference to discuss issues of performance and practice. This speaker offered to extend an invitation to the commission to participate at its next event. Barry Welliver expressed great interest and will anticipate attending.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next quarterly meeting of USSC will be held on Friday, October 24th, 2003 beginning at 9:00AM.