



State of Utah

Utah
Seismic Safety
Commission

BARRY H. WELLIVER
Chair

February 23, 2006

2006 Awards in Excellence
Western States Seismic Policy Council
801 K Street, Suite 1436
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Awards Committee members:

This letter supports the nomination of Walter J. Arabasz of the University of Utah Seismograph Stations (UUSS) for WSSPC's 2006 Awards in Excellence for Lifetime Achievement in Earthquake Loss Reduction. Walter has been actively involved, generally in a leadership role, in the progression of earthquake-related advisory groups in Utah from the Utah Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations Earthquake Task Force (1989-1991) to the Utah Earthquake Advisory Board (1991-1994) and finally the Utah Seismic Safety Commission (1994-present; Chair 1997-2001). These groups all advocated and promoted a broad earthquake awareness and loss-reduction program in Utah, and Walter, as the common denominator in all, is responsible for much of their progress toward that end.

For decades, Walter has also anchored what we call Utah's informal "Earthquake Program," consisting of a cooperative relationship among the UUSS, Utah Geological Survey (UGS), and Utah Office of Emergency Services (OES). This group has remained strong and endured through many changes in leadership of both the UGS and OES, chiefly through Walter's encouragement, persistence, and continuity.

A few of Walter's major accomplishments involving loss reduction include:

- Utah Policy Panel on Earthquake Instrumentation (1989); Walter convened this panel and involved legislators and other government officials to look at societal needs for earthquake instrumentation, looking well beyond university research goals.
- Earthquake Education Services (1994-present); Walter established this group within the UUSS to promote public awareness and education, and produce earthquake curricula, teaching aids, and displays that are used extensively.
- *A Strategic Plan for Earthquake Safety in Utah* (1995); this is the Utah Seismic Safety Commission's (USSC) long-term strategic plan, and Walter

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was a principal contributor in its development and continues to actively pursue implementation.

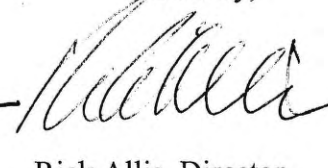
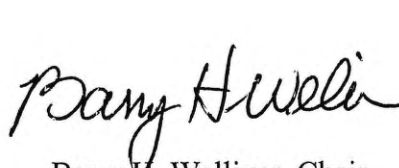
- Governor's Medal for Science and Technology (1996); cited for "tireless efforts to help residents and leaders understand and prepare for Utah's earthquake hazards."
- *Earthquake Safety in Utah: A Progress Report on the Activities and Accomplishments of the USSC 1996-2000*; this report itemizes accomplishments made during Walter's tenure as Chair of the USSC.
- Utah Advisory Committee for Urban Strong-Motion Monitoring (2001-present); Walter formed this committee to solicit advice from structural and lifeline engineers and emergency managers, among others, to site strong-motion instruments of the Advanced National Seismic System so that the instruments could meet everyone's needs.
- *Putting Down Roots in Earthquake Country* (2006); Walter is presently coordinating an initiative with the USGS to produce a document for Utah similar to those produced in California to increase awareness.

Walter is the most recognizable face of earthquakes in Utah and is seen as a chief spokesperson both by professionals and the public. He is regularly called upon to address conferences of emergency managers, building officials, engineers, and geologists to lend technical credibility to Utah's earthquake hazard and risk.

He also goes well beyond his technical role and position as director of the USSC in his efforts to increase awareness and promote loss reduction through television interviews and presentations to the general public. He has also appeared before legislative committees, the state building board, and other governmental bodies in support of earthquake loss reduction. Walter has been featured in articles in the Salt Lake Tribune, Salt Lake Magazine, Earthquake Spectra, and FEMA and Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Center publications as an example of the difference an individual advocate can make by increasing awareness and promoting loss reduction.

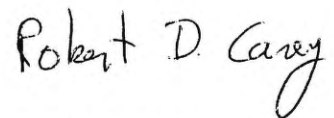
Walter has set an example for the rest of us in Utah to follow in looking beyond just our professions to work to achieve the greater societal goal of loss reduction. We believe his lifetime of meritorious service deserves recognition, and are pleased to support his nomination for the WSSPC Lifetime Achievement in Earthquake Loss Reduction Award.

Sincerely,



Barry H. Welliver, Chair
Utah Seismic Safety
Commission

Rick Allis, Director
Utah Geological Survey



Robert D. Carey
Utah Office of
Emergency Services