

# **Utah Seismic Safety Commission**

Meeting  
July 16, 2009  
Minutes

On July 16, 2009, a regularly scheduled quarterly meeting of the Utah Seismic Safety Commission (USSC) was held in the Copper Room of the Senate Building on Capitol Hill in Salt Lake City, Utah. Chairman Peter McDonough called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

## **Members Present:**

-Peter W. McDonough	Chair, American Society of Civil Engineers
-Walter Arabasz	University of Utah Seismograph Stations
-Roger Evans	Utah League of Cities & Towns
-Jake Watson	Structural Engineers Association of Utah
-Barry Smith	Western Mountain Region, American Inst. of Architects
-Fred Doehring	Utah Department of Transportation
-Rick Allis	Utah Geological Survey

## **Members Not Present:**

-Keith Squires	Division of Homeland Security
-Matt Cassel	American Public Works Association
-Michelle Jones	Association of Contingency Planners
-Matthias Mueller	Utah Division of Facilities Const. & Management
-Rep. Michael Morley	Utah House of Representatives
-Senator Peter C. Knudson	Utah State Senate
-Mark Petersen	U.S. Geological Survey (Ex-Officio)
-Sheila Curtis	Utah Insurance Department
-Evan Curtis	Governor's Office of Budget and Planning
-Doug Bausch	Federal Emergency Management Agency (Ex-Officio)

## **USSC Staff Present:**

-Bob Carey	Mitigation & Natural Hazards Section, DHS
-Karen Vetterli	Mitigation & Natural Hazards Section, DHS
-Chris DuRoss	Geologic Hazards Program, Utah Geological Survey

**Guests Present:**

-Barry Welliver	Structural Engineers Association of Utah
-Anne VonWeller	Murray City
-Julie Meeks	Utah Parent-Teacher Association
-Rep. Larry B. Wiley	Utah House of Representatives
-Chris Purcell	State Farm Insurance

➤ **WELCOME/OVERVIEW**

Chair Peter McDonough welcomed and thanked everyone for their attendance and asked for introductions.

➤ **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The USSC reviewed minutes from the January, 2009 USSC meeting in Salt Lake City and the May, 2009 joint meeting of the Nevada Earthquake Safety Council and USSC in Wells, Nevada.

***Motion: Peter McDonough made a motion to approve the January and May, 2009 USSC minutes. Barry Smith seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.***

➤ **ANNUAL ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIRS**

To proceed with the elections Walter Arabasz spoke to the process of determining a quorum. Walter speaking to record, remarked that “knowing there is a quorum present, elections can proceed. There are 15 members of the commission, four of whom have not attended for two or more meetings. Senator Mark Knudsen, Representative Morley, Michelle Jones and Matt Cassell. Six commissioners are present.”

***Motion: Walter Arabasz made a motion to nominate Roger Evans for Chair of the USSC. There were no other nominations. Roger Evans accepted the nomination.***

***Motion: Berry Smith moved to close nominations and to vote for Roger Evans as Chair. Peter McDonough seconded the motion. Roger Evans was nominated and unanimously voted to be the Chair of the USSC.***

***Motion: Peter McDonough moved that Jake Watson and Rick Allis be nominated for Vice-Chairs of the USSC. The nomination was seconded and Jake Watson and Rick Allis were unanimously voted to be Vice-Chairs.***

Peter McDonough turned over the gavel to the new Chair Roger Evans.

➤ **DISCUSSION**

The Commission considered strategies for improving seismic safety in Utah's schools. Jake Watson discussed 2009 House Bill 330 – Utah School Seismic Hazard Inventory. This project was started three years ago and it needs a more aggressive approach. An overall message from the Commission needs to be crafted to communicate to the Legislature and the public a strategy for safer facilities.

A \$50,000 FEMA grant application has been submitted for funds to start the Rapid Visual Screening (RVS) school seismic hazard inventory pilot project. The application is still pending; however, if funded, a subcommittee to guide the project would be appointed that would decide how many school buildings would be required for a valid sampling. The state has already been allocated \$65,000 in a supplemental grant for state assistance and consortium. The break down of this money is \$50,000 for the pilot project and \$15,000 for the publication of the earthquake scenario. The state is waiting to hear back from FEMA on its proposal to spend the supplemental grant on these projects. Bob Carey mentioned there might be extra money available from states that do not use their allocation to purchase data collectors for the engineers that are working on RVS pilot project.

The Commission and guests explored in a roundtable discussion what actions could be taken in advance of the legislative session to acquire existing data and to promote safe school buildings.

- ❖ Utah State Office of Education  
This office has several districts with completed seismic evaluations of school buildings. The acquisition of these district evaluations is needed to satisfy the Legislature's concern about existing data. The subcommittee can then review the standards used to perform these seismic evaluations.
- ❖ Division of Risk Management  
Risk Management, the insurance provider for Utah schools, collects data about schools. These data can be made available to the subcommittee.
- ❖ School District Offices  
To aid the school inventory pilot project, district officials can be contacted requesting their assistance in collecting any school building evaluations they may have commissioned.
- ❖ Utah Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)  
The USSC could form a partnership with the PTA to help promote safe school buildings. This bottom-up approach should help in conveying the importance of the pilot project to school district officials. The PTA could also assist in any surveys that the subcommittee may want to conduct at the school and district levels.
- ❖ Other Actions Discussed

- Engaging the media. This could be accomplished by using a website or new publications with subject matter authors contributing to their content. The group was encouraged to brainstorm a “top ten list” of media ideas.
- Creating an “Adopt a School Program” for volunteer structural engineers. These engineers would perform the RVS after receiving specific training.
- Using college and university engineering programs to perform RVS evaluations.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

**Peter McDonough** gave a presentation on pipeline seismic codes. The federal codes are relatively new. Peter also gave a short brief on the Nevada meeting. The discussion and field trip covered the recent earthquake in Wells, Nevada.

**Fred Doehring** gave presentation on codes for Utah Department of Transportation bridge design.

### ➤ **NEWS & UPDATES**

Walter Arabasz expressed appreciation and gratitude from the Commission to Peter McDonough for his outstanding performance as the Chair for the USSC for the past three years.

Bob Carey announced the Putting Down Roots in Earthquake Country handbook project is a big success. The original order was placed for 50,000 copies, at this time there are only 8,000 copies remaining.

Chris DuRoss was requested to draft a press release on the election of a new chair of the Commission

**Motion: Barry Welliver made a motion to adjourn at 12:15 P.M. Motion seconded by Peter McDonough. Motion was unanimously approved.**

### ➤ **NEXT MEETING**

**Date:** Thursday, October 22, 2009  
**Time:** 9:00 a.m.  
**Place:** Senate Building, Kletting room.

### ➤ **ADJOURNMENT**