

ACTAR NEWS

Winter 1996

Message from the Chair

Charles Sulzbach

Dear Fellow Members:

The 7th Annual Meeting of the ACTAR GBOD will convene in Philadelphia on April 4th through 8th, 1997. If you have any suggestions, complaints, etc., please notify your representative in writing so that we may address the topic.

Our hard working administrator, Suzan McDaniel, is resigning as of the April meeting. Sue has been a major factor in the Accreditation Program. She spent many hours and weekends steering the Commission in a straight line. The new administrator will be announced at the April meeting.

The directories will be updated in July. Please advise the present administrator of any corrections, additions or deletions before June 15, 1997. The directory will also include a section breaking down the accreditation members by State and/or zip code, area code or country. There are directories still available as courtesy copies to any courts, bar associations, etc. Please notify Suzan and she will forward a copy to your suggested place. Remember, client copies are available as well for a charge of \$16.95 each.

Keep promoting your accreditation and remember to include your number on your reports. Remember the accreditation /certification program promotes you and your profession. A report on the April meeting will be forthcoming.

For those of you in the north, keep warm and safe. For those in the warmer climates, "We'll be down!"

ACTAR On-Line

An Internet web site for ACTAR is presently under construction and should be on-line by late spring or early summer. The ACTAR home page will provide site users with a substantial amount of information.

The home page is intended to provide the following information and services -

The history of ACTAR

Listing of each sponsoring organization

ACTAR forms and applications which can be down loaded

Listing of pre-approved CEU courses

Electronic version of the ACTAR newsletter

Accreditation exam test dates and locations

Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

Searchable database of ACTAR accredited individuals (ACTAR Directory)

The ACTAR home page will provide links to other web sites such as those offered by ACTAR sponsoring organizations or other organizations who provide information within the field of accident reconstruction.

With regard to the accreditation database, a consensus is still being developed as to how much information will be available. Other than the basic information presently provided in the directory, the feasibility of providing individualized information such as area of specialty and Internet links to individual web sites is being evaluated. Some additional costs may be associated with direct Internet links. Additional information will be forthcoming as the project nears completion.

The availability of ACTAR information and service via the electronic medium will promote not only the ideals of accident reconstruction accreditation, but will also promote those individuals who undertook the task of becoming accredited.

New Participating Organization - Welcome ASSE

ACTAR is proud to announce the introduction of the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) as a new participating organization. ASSE fulfilled the requirements of a participating organization during the fall of 1996.

ASSE was founded in 1911 and is the oldest professional safety organization in the U.S. Within the ten technical divisions that comprise the organization, there are 139 chapters. ASSE presently has a membership in excess of 32,000. More than half of the members are involved with transportation-related responsibilities.

The ASSE representative to the ACTAR Governing Board of Directors is MI. Donald J. Basham, of the Transportation Division. For further information about the American Society of Safety Engineers, contact Donald at D.J. Basham & Co., 339 Alpine Drive, Colfax, CA 95713. He can be reached by phone at (916) 389-8250.

Board of Directors Meeting

The ACTAR Governing Board of Directors will meet in Philadelphia, PA during the weekend of April 4-6, 1997. The agenda is presently being established. The Board is always interested in addressing the concerns and needs of everyone involved with ACTAR. If anyone has any suggestions for improving the accreditation process, please contact one of the representatives on the Board of Directors.

Bits and Pieces

As of December 1996, a total of 508 individuals were accredited by ACTAR. ACTAR accreditation has expanded beyond the USA and Canada and now includes Australia and Japan.

Accreditation Renewal and CEUs

For those of you who were accredited in late 1992 or early 1993, next year marks the time to renew your ACTAR accreditation. A passing grade on the exam rewards the participant with a five-year accreditation time period.

Renewal is easy. During the 5-year period an individual must attain a total of 80 CEUs (continuing education units). Upon attaining the required number of CEUs, the individual then submits a written request for reaccreditation along with a renewal fee of \$100. Individuals may submit a request for renewal at any time prior to the expiration of the 5-year period (i.e., renew early). Upon renewal, the 5-year clock restarts.

One frequently asked question regarding accreditation renewal is; *"should I renew my accreditation early or wait until the end of the 5-year accreditation period?"* The answer may depend upon the propensity for acquiring CEUs. If you foresee attending any training courses for which CEUs are likely to be offered and you already possess the 80 CEUs required for reaccreditation, you may wish to renew early so that the upcoming course CEUs can be used for the next renewal period. CEUs, in excess of the required 80, are non- transferrable between renewal periods. Upon renewal the CEU count starts from zero.

Obtaining CEUs -

Individuals can obtain CEUs by attending ACTAR-approved training courses and seminars or by purchasing individual CEUs for activities or programs not pre-approved. Generally, one CEU is awarded for each complete hour devoted to training or the lecture topic. If the sponsoring or presenting organization for the Course or program submits an itemized curriculum which specifically denotes the hours spent in class or lecture, then CEUs will be awarded on an hour for hour basis. If only a general course or topic outline is submitted, then CEUs are calculated at .75 CEU for each hour of the entire course or seminar. CEU credit is not granted for courses or programs completed prior to the individual attaining accreditation.

It is the responsibility of the organizer or presenter of the training course, seminar or program to request CEU approval, submit all applicable fees and forward a list of those in attendance who seek CEU credit. Organizers are encouraged to seek ACTAR CEU approval prior to presenting the course or program. This speeds the process of crediting the CEUs to the individual participants.

The application fee for courses or programs which seek ACTAR CEU approval is \$25.00. An additional fee of \$5.00 is then required for each participant who successfully completes the course or program and desires the ACTAR CEUs. The \$5.00 individual fee is waived, however, for programs which are sponsored or presented by an ACTAR participating organization.

Educational institutions or other organization that present recurring courses may obtain continuous CEU approval. The presenter need only submit a course curriculum once and request continuing approval. CEUs will be calculated for that course and will remain in effect until such time that there may be a change in the curriculum. Institutions or organizations who obtain continuous CEU approval are required to submit a \$25.00 processing fee plus a \$5.00 per participant fee for each participant who seeks CEU credit. If no participants seek CEU credit, no fees are due.

Traditional Education and Field-Related Training -

Accredited individuals may be awarded CEUs for successful completion of traditional college courses, accident investigation courses, seminars, or related subject matter not presented in connection with ACTAR pre-approval.

Traditional education, college courses, etc., which include accident reconstruction or field-related topics can qualify for CEUs. One CEU may be awarded per semester hour or complete hour of instruction. Related courses will be evaluated by the ACTAR CEU coordinator on a case-by-case basis regarding the number of CEUs eligible.

Acquiring CEUs outside of pre-approved methods requires that the individual submit a CEU application, course curriculum or detailed outline and a fee of **\$3 per CEU**.

CEUs by Teaching -

Individuals teaching accident investigation or reconstruction related courses may acquire up to 25% of the required 80 CEUs (20 CEUs per 5-year period). CEUs for instructing are awarded at the rate of .10 per instructional hour. Teaching a 40-hour course can provide the instructor with a total of 4 CEUs.

Individuals seeking CEU credit for instructing courses must submit a CEU application form, detailed course curriculum outline and a fee of \$3.00 per CEU.

Reaccreditation without CEUs -

Individuals may waive the acquisition of CEUs and reaccredit by successfully retaking the complete ACTAR exam. The formal application process will not be required, however, the fee for taking the exam is \$250.

How Many CEUs Do I Have? -

CEU credit is typically recorded in an individual's file as soon as the ACTAR administrative office receives notification from the sponsoring/presenting organization that the individual successfully completed an approved course. As CEUs are credited to your file, a written notice from ACTAR is generated and mailed indicating the number of CEUs contained in your file.

In the past, most delays dealing with the acquisition of CEUs have been associated with the submitting organization or entity. It is very important that organizers or presenters of programs or courses seeking

CEU credit submit the required applications, fees and rosters in a timely manner. Individuals should consult with the program organizer or presenter if a delay is experienced with receiving CEU credit.

Confused? Have questions? -

If you have questions or need additional information regarding reaccreditation or the CEU process, call or write the ACTAR office and request the attention of the CEU Coordinator. The address and phone number of the ACTAR office is provided at the end of the newsletter.

Fund Raising - ACTAR has Expenses

ACTAR was created to serve as an independent and viable means by which to provide and promote accreditation in the field of accident reconstruction. ACTAR solicits professional individuals into the process of accreditation to promote skill and ethics within the field of accident reconstruction. The process of administering the accreditation program requires money. There are expenses associated with printing, mailing and testing and one of ACTAR's goals is to keep the expense to the individual at a minimum. In fact, ACTAR's fees are very conservative when compared with accreditation boards in other fields. To help maintain lower fees and relieve some of the reliance on those fees, the GBOD commissioned a committee to explore other means of generating operating funds.

One option being explored by the committee is that of tax-deductible contributions. The committee has been seeking groups and foundations who donate to worthwhile causes. Two hurdles were encountered during the preliminary search.

The first is that ACTAR will not accept donations to which conditions are attached that impact on our autonomy. Furthermore, ACTAR's integrity must be maintained and care must be taken when determining with whom to associate.

The second hurdle involved ACTAR's tax-exempt designation by the IRS. Although designated as a tax-exempt organization, ACTAR does not presently fit within the "community-work" title and, therefore, any contributions made to ACTAR are not tax deductible. This designation with the IRS has impeded ACTAR's appeal with several organizations seeking to donate tax deductible funds.

The committee is reviewing this situation and pursuing other options. Additional discussion is planned for the Board of Directors meeting in April. If anyone has any suggestions regarding fund raising, please contact Stan Oglesby (ACTAR #62) at P.O. Box 101, Concordia, Missouri, 64020. Stan represents Central Missouri State University on the ACTAR board.

ACTAR Exam Dates

Below is a listing of accreditation exam dates and locations currently scheduled.

Saturday, April 12, 1997-Warrenburg, MO Held after the REC"TEC class

Registration deadline is March 21, 1997

Sunday, April 20, 1997- Jacksonville, FL Held before the IPTM Special Problems...course

Registration deadline is April 5, 1997

Tuesday, May 13, 1997- Seattle, WA Held before the WATAI meeting

Registration deadline is April 29, 1997

Sunday, June 15, 1997 - New Orleans, LA Held before the ASSE conference

Registration deadline is June 1, 1997

Friday, June 20, 1997- Dover, NH Sponsored by the New Hampshire State Police

Registration deadline is June 5, 1997

Thursday, July 17, 1997- Phoenix, AZ Held before the SATAI meeting

Registration deadline is July 2, 1997

Friday, September 19, 1997- Lansing, MI Sponsored by the Michigan State Police

Registration deadline is September 4, 1997

Tuesday, September 30, 1997 - Atlantic City, NJ Held prior to NJAAR/MATAI/NATARI /NAPARS conference

Registration deadline is September 15, 1997

Please consider having your organization sponsor an ACTAR exam. Any organization can sponsor an exam, however, at least 10 participants are typically needed to offset the cost of testing. ACTAR is continuously seeking new exam locations and dates.

There is no organizational fee to sponsor an exam. Individuals seeking accreditation must submit a \$150.00 fee with their initial application and a \$50.00 exam fee when they register for their first exam.

Contact the ACTAR administrative office for additional information or to register for an exam.

Need Info?

For additional information or to pass along ideas or comments, contact one of the sponsoring organization representatives or contact the main ACTAR office at: The Accreditation Commission for Traffic Accident Reconstruction P.O. Box 40304 Denver, Colorado 80204-0304 (800) 799-8384 (voice mail) Accessible from Anywhere

Directories - 96 Still Available

Remember - Additional copies of the ACTAR Directory (Summer 1996 printing) are still available. The price per copy is **\$16.95**. (Gratis copies will, however, be made available to courts, bar associations or other entities through which ACTAR can be promoted. If you have a recipient in mind, contact the ACTAR administrative office with your suggestion.

A 1997 reprinting of the Directory is tentatively planned for July. Some format changes will occur, including an index by name and state or region. Corrections, additions or deletions from the 1996 edition should be forwarded to ACTAR by June 15, 1997. Additional information regarding the reprinting and the on-line database will be forthcoming.