ICRI’s 2011 Spring Convention was held deep in the heart of Texas—Houston, TX, to be exact, and ICRI members and guests were welcomed with open arms and in true Texas style. Thorough committee work, thought-provoking technical sessions, enthusiastic exhibitors, and our annual Recognition Luncheon were all a big part of our expanded 3-day event, held March 16-18 at the Westin Galleria Hotel. Both the Houston and North Texas Chapters joined forces to welcome 233 members and guests, proving that ICRI’s strength and relevance are still going strong in the industry.

The convention began on Wednesday morning with our “Visit the Exhibits” continental breakfast, where our exhibitors showed off the newest products and services for the morning crowd. The theme of this convention, “NDE and Structural Health Monitoring,” allowed members of the Technical Activities Committee to recruit a variety of concrete repair professionals to address issues such as corrosion assessment, service-life modeling, evaluation, and a number of other nondestructive and monitoring issues. With the expanded schedule, attendees were able to attend the technical presentations on the first day with no other scheduled meetings competing with the presentations.
After that, the Houston Chapter, one of our local hosts, whisked a group of golfers off to an outing at the Wildcat Golf Club. Even though our President was certain only Tiger Woods, Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, and Gary Player could score like the winners, it was a beautiful afternoon on the course and everyone had fun (or fell out of the cart trying). That evening, all attendees gathered in the Exhibit Area for the official Welcome Reception. Friends had the opportunity to mingle and chat with each other and the exhibitors before heading off to dinner.

Much of what ICRI does as an industry association comes from the hard work of our technical committees. We broaden our knowledge base and expand the industry by working together in these committees. All our Technical Guidelines and important documents come out of the collaboration of our members in these committees. If you want to know what is happening at any time with any of our committees, you are encouraged to drop by the Technical Committee page of the ICRI Web site to view a description of what is being worked on right now.

The highlight of the Spring Convention is the annual Recognition Luncheon. In addition to recognizing the contribution of ICRI’s supporting members and Past Presidents, ICRI honored its newest Fellows: Randy Beard, Don Caple, and Katherine Klosowski-Blatz. Dale Regnier handed out the 2010 Chapter Awards, honoring the great work of ICRI’s chapters. Included was the prestigious Chapter of the Year Award, given to the Baltimore-Washington Chapter, and the Most Improved Chapter, awarded this year to the Arizona Chapter. Current ICRI President Don Ford took to the stage and introduced the 2011 Officers and Board of Directors. The rest of the afternoon included more committee meetings and the last of the technical presentations.
Thursday’s busy schedule concluded with an evening at the historic Magnolia Ballroom in downtown Houston. The North Texas Chapter joined the Houston Chapter to host what turned out to be our largest chapter outing ever! A few Stetsons, some shined-up boots, some music to two-step to, and a Cajun southern crawfish boil and BBQ all added up to a fun-filled evening and belly-filling feast. The open bar didn’t seem to go unnoticed either.

The convention closed Friday afternoon, following the final “Visit the Exhibits” continental breakfast and a full day devoted to committee meetings. As you can see, ICRI conventions are packed full of interesting activities and entertaining networking opportunities. We hope to see everyone at the ICRI 2011 Fall Convention in Cincinnati, OH. We’ll be at the Westin Cincinnati from October 12-14, 2011. The theme for this event is “Water & Wastewater Treatment Plant Repairs” and you don’t want to miss the 2011 Project Awards Banquet and celebration. We are getting things done at ICRI and would like to extend an invitation for you to get involved. Make the most of your membership and come to a convention.