Since 1947, SES has been instrumental in supporting the standards professional as a neutral-based organization for standards training and education. As we move to complete our 63rd year as a Society, I’m proud to say that the organization is stronger than ever.

In the September 2009 issue of Standards Engineering – the SES bi-monthly journal – I remarked in the President’s column about a quotation that reads, “Some people dream of success, while others wake up and work hard at it.”

I thought that statement really characterized the attributes of the members of our Society – this, given the strength and leadership of past and present SES members, administrators, and officers. I still believe that, and I’m encouraged to see new members, new appointments to the Board, and more importantly…new and innovative ideas.

Fortunately, as times have changed, we too have adapted and responded accordingly.

One of those changes involved our branding as a society. You see, for the better part of a year, there had been considerable discussion among SES members about our organizational mission and the reflection of that mission within our name. Through the years, SES has transitioned to an organization whose mission is now dedicated to the education, training, professional development, and certification of the “standards professional”. Therefore, in order to more fully convey our mission, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the use of the designation: SES – The Society for Standards Professionals. And while the legal name of our organization remains Standards Engineering Society, it will no longer be used in the normal course of business.

As a result, many of you have seen changes in our marketing, branding, and normal discourse reflecting the new designation: SES – The Society for Standards Professionals. This has had an immediate impact in attracting non-engineers engaged in the field of standardization—who once thought the SES was only for engineers—while still maintaining our history. As an organization, we will never forget our roots or the engineers who founded (and continue to shape) SES. Yet, our ability to adapt to a more encompassing group of professionals, as reflected in our mission and our new designation, will further strengthen and expand our core membership as we reach new heights.

Last year in Toronto, I spoke about the Society’s focus on three main goals for the year: 1) Expansion of membership; 2) Expansion of the AStd and CStd certification programs; and, 3) Increased products and services to our membership.

Let’s start with…

**Expansion of Membership:**

Leona Nisbet, along with our Membership Council Director – Sonya Bird, have done of fabulous job of administering our membership renewal process. While most companies and organizations are showing decreases in this economic downturn, their combined efforts have resulted in renewing and increasing our member base 2%.

Now, as we move forward this year, we will continue to look at partnering opportunities with other associations for the benefit of our members. One scenario involves reciprocal dual membership, thereby providing a tangible benefit to the SES member (that is, membership in the other association), while at the same time increasing SES’ member base, and wingspan within the industry (that is, by accepting our partnering association’s members).
How about Expansion of the AStd and CStd Certification Programs?

As many of you are aware, as part of its mission to provide professional development and certification, SES established a program to recognize those who have demonstrated a high degree of professional competence in different areas of standards and standardization – namely, the AStd and CStd Certification Programs.

Given that fact, at the annual Board meeting in Toronto last year, I posed a challenge to the Board to ensure renewed focus and attention to those programs. I felt this was a two step process:

The first step was appointing Michael Woodford as the Certification Chair…who along with the Certification Committee…report to Trudie Williams, our Technical Council Director.

Collectively this group has made tremendous strides in ensuring a balanced, objective, and impartial certification program. Their dedication resulted in the successful processing and verification of certification applications and examinations. As a result, our certification program is moving forward and in good-hands.

The second step was the grassroots marketing effort, as many of our organizational members were instrumental in encouraging their employees to commit to the AStd or CStd certification.

As a result, we saw just over a three-fold increase in total certifications from last year to this year.

Needless to say, we are excited about keeping up the intensity of this program, and in the coming year we will be investigating the potential for CEU’s, and potential fellowships.

As President, I intend to meet with all of our organizational members this coming year to garner their continued support of the Certification Program.

This brings us to our third goal…

Increased Products and Services to our Membership

During my opening remarks yesterday, I briefly discussed the SES Virtual Community. This Virtual Community is the culmination of ideas centered on the notion of providing online standards education content to our members.

Beginning last year in Toronto, we webcasted the Annual Conference for the first time. Overwhelmingly, the reviews were positive and a call for future online content was realized. Those of you who have visited the SES website may have noticed the online posting and video link to Rob Steele’s keynote address from last year.

Starting with this conference, members will have the ability to view the conference panel sessions through the SES website. Other ideas we are considering involve video postings and interviews from some of the more prominent leaders involved in the world of standards today.

Another key component of the Virtual Community will be stimulating online discussion from our members on a variety of topics relevant to the field of standardization. The collective strength of our Society emanates from the voices of our members. Our goal is to have the SES website be the central hub for those discussions. I have to give credit to Steve Ezar and his team, who have done a wonderful job of facilitating the Virtual Community, and we look forward to that continuing.

Since we’re on the topic of the Virtual Community and all things digital, I’m pleased to note that SES has a presence now on Linked in…thanks to the hard work of our Education Council Director, Dr. Richard Forselius.
Rich brought this idea before the Board and championed this endeavor to completion. As a result, we know have a bonefide presence on the web outside of the SES website. Moving forward, we will also be setting up a Facebook page as well, to further engage the online standards community.

Some of you may recall in years past that SES had established a Washington, DC chapter which eventually became inactive some years ago. This chapter met every couple of months, and provided an active forum for guest speakers and discussion on a regional basis. On a deeper level, it provided important feedback to the SES Board to some of the regional concerns. This, combined with the fact that the leaders of those local chapters could be groomed for future SES Board positions, made this a worthwhile endeavor.

For those reasons, I’m happy to say we’ll be looking to reactive that chapter this year. We’ve also received inquiries about establishing a Midwest chapter (for example, in the Chicago area), as well as a West Coast chapter. The ability to have another active chapter—let alone another two—would expand SES’ footprint significantly. Moreover, this would diversify our membership, thereby ensuring fresh new faces, new ideas, and new talents to our Society. To that end, I would encourage anyone who is interested in helping to establish or take part in those chapters to speak to me or any of the other Board members.

As we move into next year, you’ll notice a stepped up marketing outreach and presence. Many of you have seen the recent press releases and email blasts for this conference, which played a major factor in ensuring such a high rate of in-person attendance this year. Headed by Patti Ensor, our Marketing Council Director, the Marketing Committee is also responsible for the SES Website, and all relevant content associated with that—including our Career Center...which, as far as I know, is the only one of its kind dedicated solely for the standards professional. Patti has done a great job in leading the Marketing Committee, and their contribution has made a definitive impact on all aspects of our member outreach.

There are two other items critical to the success of this Society:

The first is our bi-monthly journal – Standards Engineering – whose Editor, Diane Thompson, has done a spectacular job in creating what one Board Member refers to as our “Crown Jewel”...and I couldn’t agree more! I believe our journal is the premier neutral-based periodical focused on the standards professional and standards training & education. As we move forward in the year, we will be providing members an option to receive the journal electronically if they wish. That way, no matter where you are in the world, you can be sure you very own copy of the journal is only a click away!

The second is our Annual Conference – which is our largest generator of revenue to the Society. I don’t know about you, but I think Jean Paul did one heck of a job along with his Conference Committee this year—116 attendees versus 104 last year – that’s an 11.5% increase.

As you are probably aware by now, next year’s conference will be held at the Encore in Las Vegas, Nevada. Aside from the extracurricular events, I’m looking forward to an even bigger attendance than we had this year. To make this happen, I’m asking you for your support in volunteering for the Conference Committee, or as a speaker or moderator...and, in absence of that, we’d certainly appreciate your attendance again. Now, I can’t make any promises that you won’t lose any money, but I will guarantee you that you’ll have a great time. So please, talk up the conference with you co-workers and let’s make this one of the best!

So, where does our Society stand financially?

(For discussion purposes, these numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand. And since these financials precede the conference, there will be additional revenues and expenses received post event.) None the less…
Through July 2010, total revenue was $86k versus $79k July 2009 – an increase of 8.8%...which was attributed to our increased attendance (advanced registration) at this year’s conference, as well as the increase in AStd and CStd certifications.

Expenses were $39k ending July 2010, versus $45k July 2009 – a reduction of 15.3%....as a result of tighter budget control by the Board of Directors, and cost-cutting in the way of operations (e.g. direct costs associated with the Journal).

Liquid cash ending July 2010 was $52k versus $27k July 2009 – an increase of 92.5%...attributed to the high renewal rate of our membership, as well as enacting a revised renewal process ensuring that we are current with our membership receivables.

Liquid reserves dropped slightly this year from $76k to $66k, due to transitional costs and member services. None the less, in the end, I’m pleased to report that Total Assets of the Society equaled $119k versus $103k July 2009 – an increase of 15.5%.

The success we’ve had this year, from both an operational and financial standpoint, cannot be mentioned without highlighting the time, dedication, and hard work brought by the Board of Directors of this Society.

Our Vice President, who provided great insight and experience, given her impressive career—Ellen Emard.

Our Secretary, who was key in the administration of our meetings by providing critical documentation, as well as providing valuable feedback on relevant discussions – Maryann Gorman.

Our Treasurer, who has been diligent not only in administrating the financials, but overseeing the financial review and providing valuable insight as a former President– Mike Morrell.

Education Council Director – Rich Forselius
Marketing Council Director – Patti Ensor
Technical Council Director – Trudie Williams
Membership Council Director – Sonya Bird
Publications Council Director – Anne Sharkey. For those of you who may not know, this conference marks the end of Anne’s term on the Board. Her insight, experience, and dedication are something I’m thankful for...and given her recent honor as the recipient of the CSA Lorne Wagner award, it appears the industry agrees as well. Anne – on behalf of the Board of Directors we thank you for your service and wish you the best of luck moving forward.

I’m pleased to announce, taking over for Anne’s role of Publications Council Director will be Joy Fitzpatrick of The Boeing Company. We’re honored to have Joy joining the Board of Directors, and congratulate her on her new role...and, look forward to her insight into the field of standardization.

Two other individuals I cannot forget to mention, whose hard work, experience and insight have been invaluable to the Board are Immediate Past President Ed Mikoski…and Executive Director Leona Nisbet.
I’d like to thank our 18 organizational members who have supported the SES this past year:

- US Army Material Command – Logistics Support Activity – Packaging, Storage, and Containerization Center
- American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics
- American Petroleum Institute
- ASTM International
- CSA Standards
- Deere & Company
- IHS
- International Code Council
- ISA
- Kavi Corporation
- National Fire Protection Association
- National Institute of Standards and Technology
- Procter & Gamble Company
- Rockwell Automation
- SAI Global
- Square D Company / Schneider Electric
- Techstreet – Thomson Reuters
- Underwriters Laboratories

I’d also like to give special thanks to ANSI – specifically; Art Cote, Joe Bhatia, and the communications team of Liz Neiman, and the rest of the ANSI staff – for their support in helping to graciously market this year’s conference to their membership.

In closing, this past year has been a challenging one from an economic standpoint. We’ve been fortunate to have the support of our members, and the dedicated volunteers of our Society. As we move forward, we will continue to take proactive steps to ensure a balanced budget, while at the same time moving the bar forward to provide the best service to our members for the continued success of SES – The Society for Standards Professionals.

This is a busy time for us all at SES, but as Henry David Thoreau once wrote, “Success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it.”

And...I think he’s right...

All the best,

Paul J. Crosta
President