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MEMORANDUM

TO: Boston Association of Structural Engineers (BASE)  
Attention: Cindy Chabot, President

FROM: Jeffrey W. Struble

REFERENCE: Structural Engineers Emergency Response Plan (SEER Plan)

SUBJECT: Status Report for March 15, 2006 BASE Meeting

DATE: March 10, 2006

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A meeting was held on March 2, 2006 at The Engineering Center in Boston with members of BSCES to discuss the future development of a SEER Plan for Massachusetts structural engineers. Attending for BSCES were the following:

- Joel Lunger (engineer & current president of BSCES)
- Darcy DeGeorge (engineer & past chair of Structural Group)
- David Westerling (faculty member – Merrimack College & past president BSCES)
- Malek A. Al-Khatib (bridge engineer & current assistant treasurer - BSCES)
- Mehrdad Sasani (faculty member – Northeastern University & Structural Group)

The author was the only member attending for BASE.

The concept of having a standing SEER Committee standing ready to assist the local emergency management agencies (MEMA) was explained to the BSCES personnel, using the NCSEA's SEER Plan manual as the probable starting point in organizing such a committee. Emphasis was placed on the need for such a Committee to be long-standing commitment for its sponsoring agency, requiring periodic training of its members and constant maintenance of personal contact information. It was generally agreed that the best agency to make such a commitment would be the future

Massachusetts Institute of Structural Engineers (MISE), which is still in its formative stages (the status of MISE was unknown by both sides at the time of the meeting). It was also generally agreed that the need for having a SEER Committee in Massachusetts was such that an attempt should be made to begin organizing it as soon as possible and not to wait for the actual incorporation of MISE as the Mass. structural engineers' professional organization. More on this subject is presented later in this report.

Mr. Lunger is himself a fully-trained structural engineer volunteer attached to the Beverly, MA branch of FEMA's Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) Task Force Response System and as such recognized that SEER Plan volunteers could not be asked to do what he does when called to a disaster site by virtue of the specialized training required. SEER personnel would only be needed for very large-scale events in a support role for emergency management operations. To that end, however, he stressed the need for training of all SEER volunteers to be able to be effective and noted that the ATC-20 programs recommended in the SEER Plan manual could provide such training. The group agreed that arranging for training like this would be a major responsibility of a standing SEER Committee, including funding and scheduling.

Mr. Westerling was particularly interested in a SEER Committee's interaction with established government emergency management agencies and mentioned that he is studying crisis management at Harvard University. He noted the SEER Manual's recommendation for a well-informed government liaison within an established SEER Committee and pointed out recent events following Hurricane Katrina as proof of the wisdom of this recommendation. He offered to help organize this aspect of a future SEER Committee.

Mr. Sasani's area of academic interest is focused on understanding building collapses and he felt that a SEER Committee could benefit by keeping abreast of the research now being done on this subject.

It was decided that the organization of a SEER Committee within Massachusetts should be pursued now and not to wait for the full establishment of MISE before beginning this

organization. To that end, it was agreed by all attending to petition our respective Boards to allow the creation of a joint committee between BASE and BSCES whose charge would be to research the organization of a standing SEER Committee in all of its operational aspects. The final goal of this research would be to present formal recommendations to a sponsoring agency for the creation and maintenance of such a Committee as a pre-organized unit of volunteer structural engineers that would be made available to MEMA. It was generally agreed that that sponsoring agency would most likely be a fully-functioning MISE.

The make-up of this joint committee was agreed to be three volunteers from both BASE and BSCES (six total), appointed by the respective Boards and would be regarded within each organization as ad-hoc sub-committees. The first meeting of this joint committee was tentatively scheduled for May 4th, 2006 at 10 AM at The Engineering Center. It is recommended to BASE's Board that costs associated with this joint committee be shared equally between the two organizations.

The author respectfully volunteers to serve on this joint committee.