



Report of the 1982 President

Harold W. Paxton

Despite the dismal economic climate that continued to plague the minerals extractive industries, AIME enjoyed a very gratifying increase in both revenues and membership during the past year. In fact, the Institute membership increased by 6,604 for a year-end total of 92,883, or a gain of 7.7%. I have no doubt that AIME will pass the 100,000 member mark in the coming year. One cannot help but speculate how this prediction might be received by the 22 original members who founded our organization back in 1871.

In this year of economic adversity, AIME members can be justifiably proud of these quantitative accomplishments. Yet, had none of these records been achieved, 1982 would still go down as a milestone period in the long and illustrious history of the Institute. The single event which makes my presidential year a very special one was the adoption of most of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Transition Committee by the AIME Board of Directors on October 20, 1982. The decision to move towards greater decentralized management within the Institute is not unique to the timeframe of the past 12 months. It is an historical pattern that has been under way since the end of World War II. But it is a process that has been marked by a few critical periods of intense activity during the past four decades. 1982 was such a critical period. The A/ME of 1983 and beyond will be substantially different from the AIME of earlier years.

Space does not permit a detailed summary of all of the issues addressed by the Transition Committee. All of the recommendations of the Committee that were adopted by the Board are important; however, I think the following two examples will help you to appreciate the full significance of the structural changes that are currently under way.

The first substantial modification emphasizes the fact that the Institute will henceforth operate as a more explicit federation of member societies. AIME will serve as a unifying forum whereby the Constituent Societies associate and cooperate to the extent that they choose. The Societies are authorized to play the primary role in providing representatives to organizations outside the Institute while the Institute Headquarters will serve those functions which are delegated to it by the Constituent Societies or required by the corporate structure. The second major change endorses separate incorporation by the Constituent

Societies on an individual option basis. Clearly, this is a very major change in the structure of AIME.

A number of members and Society staffs contributed greatly to the monumental effort of the Ad Hoc Transition Committee, and to the actions of the Board in dealing with these difficult issues. While I would like to thank all of these people, special thanks go to my predecessor, 1981 AIME President Bob Merrill, who served as Chairman of the Transition Committee. The implementation of many of these changes will require time, and I leave this unfinished task in the capable hands of my successor, 1983 AIME President Edward Runyan, with a personal promise to Ed that I will assist him in any way that I can in my role as Past President in the coming year.

In view of these changes, the need for improved communication will be even greater in the coming years. Whenever an organization passes real responsibility to small groups within itself, the need for good communication is imperative or we have a substantial danger of effects which can be counterproductive. The purpose of the changes, after all, is to strengthen both our Societies and the Institute.

I make this statement in part because, as you know, AIME is itself a member of several "umbrella" organizations-AAES, ABET and the Engineering Founder Societies. I am pleased to tell you that ABET is in great shape-I was privileged to attend their 50th anniversary in late 1982. AAES, however, has some problems of purpose and organization, but we have been working hard on the AAES Board, and especially with my colleagues, the Founder Society Presidents, to analyze the problems and shape the future of the engineering profession.

My year as your President has been challenging and demanding, perhaps more demanding than I had originally envisioned. But the satisfactions of helping to guide the Institute in this turbulent year have jar outweighed the difficulties. I am sincerely grateful that I have had the privilege to serve as the President of this unique professional association, so rich in history and tradition. And I am no less thankful for having had the chance to attend the numerous meetings which have provided the opportunities to meet so many of you, the individual members who make this organization what it is.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Harold W. Paxton".

Harold W. Paxton
1982 AIME President