



**California/Nevada Section
Bimonthly Update
March 15, 2007
Seventh Edition**

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*** Section Meeting Draws ~143**

Valentine's Day brought two special events together in the same area: the World Ag Expo, also known as the Tulare Farm Show, and the California-Nevada Section meeting that included a keynote speech by California Secretary of Food and Agriculture, A. G. Kawamura.

The Section meeting was held at the Edison AgTAC Center in Tulare, Calif., directly across the street from the World Ag Expo. A western corral barbecue dinner awaited the 143 meeting participants. In attendance was ASABE President Charles Sukup, who had the opportunity earlier to attend his first World Ag Expo (www.worldagexpo.com). Historic Landmark dedication videos brought by President Sukup and a slideshow of Section information were presented during the reception and dinner.

After the obligatory business items, the meeting continued with updates given by the five schools in attendance: Butte College, Cal Poly. San Luis Obispo, California State University (CSU) Fresno, Modesto Junior College, and the University of California (UC) Davis. Expect to see more detailed reports in forthcoming editions of the Update. New officers Ginger L-Heureux, Membership Chair, and Traeger Cotten, Industry/Student Liason, were welcomed to the leadership team.

Attending for the very first time, the relatively new Modesto Junior College Student Mechanization Branch's 1/4-Scale Tractor Team, advised by member engineer Steve Amador, gave a report of their successes over the past two years. The Cal Poly 1/4-Scale Tractor Team followed with their report and a presentation of plaques of appreciation to last year's sponsors, AIM and the Section. The Section pledged \$500 to each team to support their activities.

Past Section Chair Jim Usher got the surprise of the evening when he received the Section Engineer of the Year Award for his work with Bently Agrowdynamics and his contributions to the Section. Not only an exemplary engineer for his company, Jim gave an enlightening talk on biodiesel at last year's meeting and is an integral part of the Section's fundraising activities.

Deborah Hamblin of the Irrigation Association spoke enthusiastically on both her appreciation of and the further need for agricultural engineers in the challenge of managing the limited western water supply. ASABE President Charles Sukup discussed the Centennial and the Society's past, present, and future.

California Secretary of Food and Agriculture, A. G. Kawamura, gave a compelling keynote speech regarding food safety, bioterrorism, water supply, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's agricultural childhood, conservation, and the environment.

This meeting, with the largest attendance in many years, could not have been pulled off as it was without the assistance of many people outside of the leadership group. Special thanks are due to Betsy Gerwig (sign-in), Andy Holtz (posters), Mark Perkins (photos), and parents-to-be Ginger & Jeremy L'Heureux (sign-in). Photos from the meeting can be viewed at www.asabecanv.org.

*** Industry Sponsors of Section Activities**

On behalf of the Section, we thank our generous members who directly, or through their companies, support our program.

Ag Industrial Manufacturing – Claude Brown, PE & Paul Burkner, PE, Lodi, CA – www.agindustrialmanufacturing.com
Bently Agrowdynamics – Donald E. Bently, PE & Jim Usher, PE, Minden, NV – www.bentlyagrowdynamics.com
Hydratec – Fred Hamisch, PE, Delano, CA – www.hydratec.com
Irrigation Design and Construction – Michael Conrad, Patterson, CA

Rain for Rent – Mike Grundvig, PE, Bakersfield, CA – www.rainforrent.com
Roberts Irrigation Products – Paul McFadden, Patterson, CA – www.robertsirrigration.com
Valley Irrigation Service – Patrick Murray, Madera, CA

A special thank you to Claude Brown and Paul Burkner who we believe broke their own record for the number of guests they invite and sponsor, with this resulting subsidy helping to further offset dinner costs for student attendees. Among their guests were colleague engineers from Vision Robotics (www.visionrobotics.com) who Claude and Paul are collaborating with on the development of a robotic grapevine pruning system that was on display in AIM's booth at the farm show.

*** Section Poster Award Winners**

Undergraduate

First Place: Cal Poly 1/4-Scale Tractor Design Team.

Second Place: Design and Construction of an Integrated Automation Control System. Ben Holtz, Cal Poly.

Graduate

First place: Fermentable Sugar, Biogas, and Particleboard Production from Saline Biomass. Yi Zheng, Zhongli Pan, Ruihong Zhang, Bryan Jenkins, and Hamed El-Mashad, UC Davis.

Second Place: Geospatial Wine Grape Quality Modeling and Differential Harvesting for Precision Viticulture. Sivakumar Sachidhanantham, Balaji Sethuramasamyraja, Robert Wample, and Matthew Yen, CSU.

*** Cal Poly mourns Professor John Merriam**

On February 9th, 2007, John L. Merriam passed away. Merriam was a professor emeritus in the BioResources and Agricultural Engineering Department in Cal Poly's College of Agriculture, from which he retired in 1978. He was inducted as an ASABE Fellow in 2005.

For more than 60 years, Merriam had been involved in irrigation and water management issues as a researcher, educator, consultant, and philanthropic program contributor in the U.S. and abroad. His work took him to Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Egypt and China. His work earned two patents in irrigation technology.

During his career, Merriam received other honors including the Conservationist of the Year award from the Soil Conservation Society of America, Man of the Year from the California Irrigation Institute and the Kishida International Award from ASABE.

(Selected biographical information adapted from Cal Poly College of Ag news release dated July 25, 2005)

*** Heidrick Western Center for Ag Equipment hosts FFAers**

March 3rd was UC Davis' 31st Annual Agricultural & Environmental Sciences Field Day. More than 3,000 FFA and 4-H students from the furthest reaches of California and Nevada converged on the campus to display their agricultural knowledge and skills. This year the Joe A. Heidrick, Sr. Western Center for Ag Equipment (Biological & Ag Engineering Department) again hosted the Ag Mechanics and Farm Power contests. Photos from the day can be seen at <http://www.tractors.ucdavis.edu/FieldDay2007.htm>. Do you recognize anyone? You can read more about it at http://caes.ucdavis.edu/NewsEvents/News/WebNews/mar_fieldday.htm and <http://caes.ucdavis.edu/NewsEvents/Events/FieldDay.htm>.

*** Berry Combine Historic Landmark**

Plans are still moving ahead with the dedication for the world's first self-propelled combine. The dedication event will be held in the Tulare/Visalia area, and it may occur prior to the next Bimonthly Update. We kindly ask anyone interested in attending the ceremony to call Victor at 530-752-1898 to be put on a quick-contact list. Thanks to Bill Chancellor and Grahame Quick for their work recognizing this landmark.

- Bimonthly Update contributors: Carolyn Jones; Victor Duraj; ASABE Editor, Suzanne Howard; and Cal Poly news service.
- For previous editions of the Update, please visit www.asabecanv.org.
- If you have questions or comments, feel free to contact Victor Duraj at 530-752-1898, vduraj@ucdavis.edu
- If you have ideas for Update items, or would like to get involved in the leadership group, let us know.