



2004-2005

February Meeting Notice

Minnesota Geotechnical Society and American Society of Engineers

What Boston's "Big Dig" project accomplished and what we can learn from it

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Chairman, National Academy of Engineering Committee for Review of the Project Management Practices Employed on the Boston Central Artery/Tunnel ("Big Dig") Project

The Boston Central Artery/Tunnel Project, popularly known as the Big Dig, is one of the largest, most difficult, and most expensive public works projects ever attempted. Originally budgeted in 1986 at \$2.6 billion (in 1982 dollars) with a scheduled completion date in December 1998, the project is now estimated to cost \$14.6 billion (in 2003 dollars) with a completion date in 2005. The cost increases and schedule slippages have generated considerable attention both in the press and among politicians. Meanwhile, the project has produced several major technical achievements, including the largest use of slurry walls in North America, the widest cable-stayed bridge in the world, major use of soil mixing and soil freezing, jacking a 40-foot wide tunnel under an operating railway, constructing underground vehicular tunnels within feet of two existing and operating transit tunnels, keeping downtown traffic moving throughout the project, and causing minimal damage to existing buildings.

In November 2002 Dr. Christian was appointed chairman of a committee of the National Academy of Engineering/National Research Council to review current management procedures and make recommendations to expedite completing the project. The committee's report was delivered in February 2003. A further review of the budgeting procedure in June 2003 indicated that many of the committee's proposals have been implemented. It is the unanimous opinion of the committee that, far from being unique, this project has features typical of many other major transportation projects now proposed or under way in congested metropolitan areas. To avoid the cost and schedule overruns and the attendant political difficulties, organizations planning such projects would do well to learn from the example of the Big Dig.

Date: Thursday, February 24, 2005

Location: Continuing Education and Conference Center (formerly Earle Brown Continuing Education Center)
1890 Buford Avenue, on the St. Paul Campus of the University of Minnesota. [Directions](#)

Time: 6:00 Social Hour Sponsored by Hayward Baker, Inc.

7:00 Dinner – Buffet style

8:00 Presentation – John T. Christian, P. E., Ph. D., Hon. M. ASCE

(One professional development hour toward continuing education requirements for Professional Engineers is available).

Cost: \$20.00 members, \$20.00 non-members, and \$5.00 Full-time students, payable to MGS at the door.

Reservations: Requested by 12 Noon, Friday, February 18, 2005.

Please register via the website at <http://www.mngeotechnicalsociety.com/eventsmpls.asp> or call Ryan Peterson with your reservation. Ryan may be reached by phone: (612) 379-8805 or fax: (612) 379-8160

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