

# AIChE Central IL Section News

Summer 2009  
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Central Illinois Section

## President's Corner

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Welcome, and greetings to all the members of the AIChE Central Illinois Local Section. I am pleased to inform you that we have been able to form a new committee with the intentions to have more frequent meetings and activities. Though the section has been dormant for a couple of years, with the new energetic team we plan to bring activities such as seminars, plant trips, and picnics. I sincerely request your active participation in the section's activities. I urge you to provide input to the committee members (listed at the end of this letter) about the activities that you would like to see. It is our intention to have meetings at the three major locations, Champaign-Urbana-Danville, Decatur, and Peoria areas, on a rotation basis. On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, we had a very successful first meeting for this calendar year. It was an enjoyable evening at the I-Hotel on the campus of the University of Illinois, in Urbana- Champaign (IL). Everyone enjoyed both the social and technical programs. The technical seminar on biodiesel by Dr. Timothy Lindsey and Mr. Joseph Pickowitz of the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center, was timely in the days of the high energy costs and exploration of alternate energy sources. The presentation also gave a snap shot of life in a village of Haiti! We had about 14 people in attendance. We hope to have many more gatherings and expect to see many more of you at the meetings and enjoy the fellowship of other Chemical Engineers (Chemineers)!

We now have a secretary (Dr. Veera Boddu, US Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratory, Champaign, IL), a treasurer (Dr. S. Kumaran, Cabot Corp., Tuscola, IL), and a news coordinator (Ms. Christine Yu, ADM, Decatur, IL). Contact information of the executive committee members is listed below. Thank you and have an enjoyable summer 2009.

Sincerely,

Nasib Qureshi, USDA, Peoria, IL  
President / Chair, AIChE Central Illinois

## Executive Committee Members

Chair: Dr. Nasib Qureshi  
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 Tel (309) 681-6318

Treasurer: Dr. S. S. Kumaran  
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 Tel (217) 722-1074

Secretary: Dr. Veera Boddu  
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 Tel (217) 398-5511

News Coordinator: Ms. Christine Yu  
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 Tel (217) 424-5513

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*“Growing jatropha curcas  
 for renewable energy –  
 biodiesel production in  
 Haiti.”*

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## Seminar Details

At the April local section meeting, Dr. Tim Lindsey and Mr. Joe Pickowitz of the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center at the University of Illinois in Champaign, IL, gave a very informative presentation about growing *jatropha curcas* for renewable energy - biodiesel production in Haiti.

Due to the meager state of Haiti’s current energy sources, there is a great demand for the development of a sustainable energy system. Electricity is currently provided by diesel generators. A source of biodiesel could provide greater amounts of fuel for those generators and increase the capacity of Haiti’s power grid. The *jatropha* plant, a native to Haiti, has been used to make biodiesel elsewhere. Tim and Joe traveled to Haiti to assess the advantages and challenges of producing biodiesel from *jatropha* in Haiti.

A significant advantage that they found was that the yield of oil from one acre of *jatropha* crop was at least 14 times greater than the yield of oil from one acre of soybean crop. In addition, *jatropha* oil was low in fatty acid content and was therefore good quality oil for biodiesel production. *Jatropha* farmers typically planted their fields in rows, alternating the ungrazeable *jatropha* with grazeable plants. This allowed the field to remain a food source, addressing the food vs. fuel issue associated with biodiesel production. Finally, the glycerin byproduct from the biodiesel process was used to make soap.

Some of the challenges that Tim and Joe encountered involved limited access raw materials and supplies. They also had limited access to water and electricity. Shipping and travel proved difficult at times. Other challenges included the weather (rainy season), currency issues, and limited work force capabilities.

In the final assessment, the *jatropha*-based biodiesel production project has potential. Joe will be returning to Haiti in the coming months to continue the work that has been started.



*Dinner at the Local Section Meeting,  
 Champaign, IL*

## Upcoming Meeting

The next local section meeting will be held at Richland Community College in Decatur, IL on July 15, 2009. Further details will be distributed via e-mail at a later time.

## Nominations for 2010 Committee

Please send nominations for 2010 President / Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and News Coordinator to Nasib Qureshi ([Nasib.Qureshi@ars.usda.gov](mailto:Nasib.Qureshi@ars.usda.gov)), before July 10, 2009. Nominations are invited for AIChE's Central Illinois Section. Self nominations are allowed.

## Items of Interest

Dr. Veera Boddu of the U.S. Army Corps, ERDC-CERL, Champaign, IL, was promoted to the Research Grade GS 15/DB V position as of June 12, 2009. He was also awarded a patent (U.S. Pat. No. 7,524,794 B2) on April 28, 2009. The patent describes a perlite sorbent for adsorption of heavy metal vapors at high temperatures. Congratulations Dr. Boddu!

If you have any information that you would like to share with other members or include in the next newsletter, please send it to either our news coordinator (Christine Yu) or secretary (Veera Boddu). The contact information is below.



### Contact Information

President / Chair:

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*AIChE Central Illinois Section Group Photo, April 2009*