

A Brief History of the East Tennessee Section of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers

The East Tennessee Section of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE) traces its origin back to the TEC Junior Chemical Engineer's Club, which was organized on December 7, 1943. The membership of this group was limited to employees of TEC. It had as its purpose, in addition to technical advancement, the acquainting of its membership with the operations of various departments and division of TEC. Most of the members of this club were also Junior members of the AIChE.

After about a year, the group expressed interest in forming a local section of the AIChE. Therefore, on Wednesday evening, February 14, 1945, a group of twenty-seven chemical engineers met in the Research Library (then in Building 95) of TEC. Members of the Tennessee Eastman Junior Chemical Engineers' Club, as well as members of the national AIChE, were represented in the group. The purpose of the meeting was to consider organization of a local section of the AIChE. Dr. R. L. Hasche presided at the meeting and reported on his contacts with the National Committee on local sections. He learned that the successful operation of the Junior Chemical Engineers' Club could be used as the one-year probationary period necessary to obtain a local section charter. This would enable the group to obtain a charter immediately. After considerable discussion, it was moved and seconded that if it were agreeable with the Junior Chemical Engineers' Club, steps would be taken to organize a local section of the AIChE. The motion was passed unanimously and the meeting declared open for nomination of officers. At this first organizational meeting, the following officers were elected:

Chairman: [R. L. Hasche](#)

Vice-Chairman: C. L. Fletcher

Secretary-Treasurer: Jack J. Gordon

Directors: M. B. Convisor

R. B. Hickey

It was also moved, seconded and adopted that the Executive Committee "be instructed to study sample by-laws and make recommendations thereon, pending final adoption."

On April 4, 1945, a business meeting was held. Dr. Hasche read the correspondence with the TEC Junior Chemical Engineers' Club and the letter of petition for charter to the AIChE. The proposed by-laws for the Section were discussed and passed after a minor amendment. Plans for the first regular meeting were then discussed. The meeting concluded after a resolution was passed giving Dr. Hasche "a vote of thanks for the way in which he handled the organization of the Section."

The presentation of the charter to the East Tennessee Section was made at its first general meeting on April 10, 1945. With 45 members enrolled at this time, the Section became the 19th local section to receive a charter. The Junior Chemical Engineers' Club eventually evolved into the TEC Professional Development Club.) About 100 members and guests were

present at the meetings. Dr. Bass, then National President of the AIChE, was the principal speaker. He spoke on the subject "Regional Development through Industrial Research."

During the first ten years, there were a number of highlights in the history of the East Tennessee Section as its membership grew to 91. There were field trips to area industries, technical meetings and meetings devoted to professional development. Two national officers spoke at local meetings. One of the most ambitious undertakings was the co-sponsorship of an Intersectional meeting with the Northeast Tennessee Section of the American Chemical Society. This meeting was held May 7 and 8, 1948, at the General Shelby Hotel in Bristol, Virginia. With a total registration of 326, the meeting was the largest local scientific meeting in the South. The program included 17 technical papers presented in five sessions, two plant trips, and a banquet.

On October 14, 1955, the Section held a special Tenth Anniversary Meeting at Ridgefields Country Club in Kingsport, Tennessee. In attendance were 110 members and guests. Mr. Andrew Scott, chairman of the Section, presented certificates to the ten past chairmen in recognition of the work they had done. The speaker for the evening was Dr. B. F. Dodge, Chairman of the Chemical Engineering Department of Yale University and 1955 President of AIChE.

In 1982, the section became incorporated in the State of Tennessee. At the same time, the highly successful newsletter was begun with Steve Rushing and Tim McClain as the first editors. Also, a member of the local section, John Sanders, was elected Vice-President of the National AIChE.

In 1983, the East Tennessee Section joined with the national AIChE to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Institute. The successful local Diamond Jubilee Celebration with its Chemical Engineering Symposium (attendance: 220) and special banquet provided an additional boost in momentum.

In 1984, John Sanders, a member of our local section, served as National AIChE President. Local section dues were increased from \$4 to \$6 per year, a rate which was maintained through 1998. Also this was the year that Eastman AIChE members wrote and graded the 1984 AIChE Student Contest Problem with Don Lane as chairman for the effort. Steve Janulis was the 'guinea pig' used to test the problem.

In 1986, the chapter started a Professional Engineers Exam Review Course (for the Principles and Practice of Engineering Examination) which has continued to be taught by experts. The course currently consists of 6 sessions lasting 2.5 hours each. In 1997, a record 20 engineers took the course.

In recent years, the local chapter has sponsored two symposia. In 1988, a half-day symposium was held at which eight speakers covered a variety of topics. In 1994, an all day symposium was held with a total attendance of more than 200 people and featuring numerous speakers and vendor displays. Total registration fees of \$8645 were collected vs. only \$3223 in expenses, which allowed the chapter to continue to operate with some of the lowest local section dues in the nation.

In 1993, the East Tennessee Section celebrated its 50th anniversary with a special meeting. Ed Bassler, then national President of AIChE, was the featured speaker.

[Several members](#) have been awarded the grade of [Fellow of the AIChE](#). All members who have held elected offices in the local section are listed [here](#). Many others have joined with these people to contribute to the success of the local section. In 2000, Bill Shaw, former Acid Division Superintendent and Toy Reid, former President of Tennessee Eastman Company, were honored for being 50 year members of AIChE and for their service to the profession and our organization. In the year 2001, the CEO of Eastman Chemical, Earnie Deavenport, repaid his mentor by renaming the Eastman Employee Center in Kingsport after Toy Reid. Mr. Deavenport is also a member of the local section of AIChE and is a member of the National Academy of Engineering.

Bill Shaw and Toy Reid, Honored by East Tennessee Section, May 9, 2000



[Dr. Jeff Siirola](#), East Tennessee Fellow, became the 2004 president-elect of the national AIChE, and will serve as president in 2005.

Now in a new millenium, the East Tennessee Section of AIChE continues to make important contributions to the profession. In addition to regular speakers and plant tours, the chapter continues to teach the P.E. Exam Review class, is involved in and supports National Engineers Week activities, and Mathcounts. In recent years, the chapter has contributed \$1500 annually to the East Tennessee Engineering Association Council (ETEAC) scholarships for graduating high school seniors to enter college to study engineering. Technical presentations are well-attended (normally exceeding 100 people), and significant participation comes not only from Eastman, but also from retirees, Northeast State students, and via teleconference, engineers from BAE and Nuclear Fuel Services.

In 2011, the local section held a contest to create a local section logo, with the winning entry depicted a chemical plant silhouette with the Smoky Mountains in the background. After months of refinement including green vs. blue hues, etc., the new logo was unveiled:



[RETURN TO AICHE E. TENN. LOCAL SECTION HOMEPAGE](#)