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LEHIGH ASSEMBLES THE WORLD'S BRIDGE EXPERTS

Experts from around the world recently gathered to address the critical issues of bridge safety, maintenance and management at an international conference in Philadelphia organized by Lehigh's Advanced Technology for Large Structural Systems (ATLSS) Center.

The 2010 International Association for Bridge Maintenance and Safety (IABMAS) conference (IABMAS2010) was chaired by Dan Frangopol, the first Fazlur R. Khan Endowed Chair of Structural Engineering and Architecture at Lehigh, and Richard Sause, ATLSS director and Joseph T. Stuart Professor of Structural Engineering. John Fisher, professor emeritus of civil engineering and cofounder of ATLSS, served as honorary chair.

"The great interest around the world in technology and processes for sustaining bridges and other critical infrastructures enabled us to attract a record number of participants," said Frangopol, the founding president of IABMAS.

"There is always a strong mix of individuals from international research teams working to improve the technology and processes for sustaining bridges, along with international practicing engineers who face the real challenges of maintaining and managing critical infrastructure."

Conferees take a field trip to ATLSS

Featured speakers at the event included Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell, one of the founders of the Building America's Future coalition; Maorun Feng, chief bridge engineer of the Chinese Ministry of Transportation; Myint Lwin, director of the Office of Bridge Technology in the Federal Highway Administration; Scott Christie, deputy secretary for highway administration for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT); Thomas Macioce, PennDOT chief bridge engineer; and many other noted bridge designers, engineers and researchers.

IABMAS 2010 was the fifth international conference held by the organization and the first to take place in the United States. It attracted more than 700 participants from 39 countries and included more than 500 papers in 73 technical sessions. The conference also drew 37 national and international exhibitors. Technical sessions were grouped into

several categories, including bridge safety and security; procedures for bridge rehabilitation; and techniques for bridge maintenance, condition assessment and management.

The conference papers are contained in a proceedings volume and a 4,000-page CD-ROM, which provides an up-to-date overview of the field of bridge engineering as well as significant contributions to the decision-making process for bridge maintenance, safety, security, serviceability, risk-based management, and health monitoring using traditional and emerging technologies.

On the first day of the conference, 100 participants toured the ATLSS Center, which was founded in 1986.

“By hosting the conference in Philadelphia, and having participants visit the ATLSS Center and Lehigh,” said Sause, “we were able to reaffirm our position as leaders in research on the design, construction, performance, maintenance and rehabilitation—the entire life cycle—of the large structural systems of the civil infrastructure.”

The main objective of IABMAS, which was founded in 1999, is to promote international cooperation in the fields of bridge maintenance, safety, and management for the purpose of enhancing the welfare of society. IABMAS has members in 52 countries.

The next IABMAS conference (IABMAS2012) is scheduled for 2012 in Villa Erba, Lake Como, Italy.

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