

for the benefit of others who may face such problems when cultures clash in the future.

The Role of Coastal Ecosystem Degradation in Tsunami Damage

(PI: Philip R. Berke, University of North Carolina): An interdisciplinary team will explore the links between ecosystem degradation and damage and examine the potential tsunami mitigation benefits of coastal ecosystems. The study will be carried out over several interrelated tasks: (1) identify three to six matched pairs of sites (high versus low environmental degradation) within the tsunami impact zone; (2) examine remote sensing images of each matched pair to determine links between losses and ecosystem integrity; (3) conduct a field investigation of one matched pair to verify remote sensing data and assess the influence of the context and environmental planning institutions in ecosystem protection; and (4) analyze and synthesize multiple sources of data to determine the influence of environmental degradation on disaster losses. The study will provide insights into the role of ecosystem degradation, remote sensing as a research tool, and environmental conservation as a mitigation strategy.

Learning from Earthquakes

Additional Tsunami Briefings

A special EERI LFE briefing by members of the reconnaissance teams and other contributors on the great Sumatra (M9.0) earthquake and Indian Ocean tsunami of December 26, 2004, has been scheduled for May 23 in Washington, D.C.

Others are being planned for the Midwest and San Francisco. Information on speakers, venues, and directions will be e-mailed to members and posted on the EERI web site, www.eeri.org.

News of the Institute

Talking Points Guide for Media Interviews

You will find a guide containing "Talking Points for Media Interviews" inserted in the centerfold of this *Newsletter*, attached with removable glue.

The guide is intended for your use in preparing for media interviews. The first two topic areas are "general earthquake risk" and "research funding." The guide recommends that these two areas be emphasized if you are interviewed by the media following an earthquake or other event that attracts attention to seismic issues. They are points upon which there is general agreement in the earthquake community; referring to them will present a consistent message that will serve to advance the causes of earthquake engineering practice and research.

The balance of the guide is devoted to background information about the following five categories: hazard mitigation, earthquake size and impact, buildings and codes, response and recovery, and EERI's earthquake professionals. This information is meant to help you answer technical questions. Agreed upon by specialists within the EERI membership, these points are intended to provide accurate bases for responses. After the occurrence of earthquakes and tsunami elsewhere, reporters often ask, "Can this happen here?" This information will help you construct your answers appropriately.

You may also wish to take a more proactive approach to using this guide and contact the media yourself whenever an opportunity occurs to get the message out. For example, after a major earthquake or related hazard, the media are often looking for members of the professional community to interview.

News of the Membership

Frangopol Awarded Newmark Medal



Dan M. Frangopol

Dan M. Frangopol, an EERI member since 1987 and a professor in the Department of Civil, Environmental, and Architectural Engineering at the University of Colorado at Boulder, has been awarded the prestigious Nathan M. Newmark Medal for 2005 by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). The medal was presented at the 2005 ASCE Structures Congress last month in New York City. It is given to an ASCE member whose outstanding contributions in structural mechanics have substantially strengthened the scientific base of structural engineering. Frangopol was cited for "outstanding contributions to structural engineering and engineering mechanics, particularly the modeling and optimization of the lifetime system performance of deteriorating materials and structures in civil infrastructure."

Frangopol's research has been in the area of modeling and optimization of the lifetime system performance of deteriorating materials and structures in civil infrastructure, safety and reliability in structural engineering and engineering mechanics, life-cycle cost analysis and design of highway bridges, and multi-criteria optimization. More recently, he has focused on health monitoring of high-temperature materials and systems and life-cycle analysis and optimization of micro-systems.