



**March 2023**  
**First Quarter**

# Fire in the Hole Scroll

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*If you have any questions regarding this newsletter or would like to update your communication preferences, please email Carrie at [carriej@sayreassociates.com](mailto:carriej@sayreassociates.com)*

**Thanks for reading!**

## BHC Member Paul Sterk Receives Award at National ISEE Conference

Black Hills Chapter of ISEE long-time member Paul Sterk was awarded the **Distinguished Service Award** at the Annual ISEE Conference, held in San Antonio, Texas, in February.

Over 125 exhibitors and close to 1,600 people attended the conference from over 50 different countries. The national conference included technical sessions, poster sessions, workshops, socials, exhibit hall, and awards banquet.



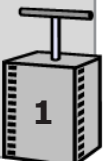
Paul's son Dan Sterk offered the following remarks on Paul's remarkable career in the explosives industry:

"Throughout Paul's time, he was always looking for ways to become more well-rounded in the explosives field and expand his own toolbox. He attended conferences whenever the opportunity presented itself, and read everything he could get his hands on concerning new and different ways to break rock. Paul joined the ISEE in 1987 and even served on the Board of Directors for 6 years. Paul wrote the underground chapter of the ISEE Blaster's Handbook that we all use as a reference today. The ISEE afforded Paul the opportunity to expand his network of drillers and blasters, to make life long colleagues and friends, and to grow his reputation in the industry. Due to his involvement in the ISEE and that reputation, Paul was able to be a guest lecturer at many universities, and appeared on television with NOVA Science and the Discovery Channel.

Since 1991 Paul has been a member of the Black Hills Chapter of the ISEE working in various roles. He still attends meetings today and helps out with the planning of the annual Best in the West Drill and Blast Conference. If you get the chance to attend, Paul is not hard to find at the banquet: he will be the only person there wearing a tuxedo T-shirt.

Paul was always generous with his time, and his various company's money, in working with the Crazy Horse Memorial in South Dakota. Paul was able to get each of the different companies that he worked for to donate product to the mountain carving, and then Paul would act as the

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ►**



## Continued: Sterk Receives Well-Deserved Award

Technical Representative for that product. This provided Paul with a chance to learn about mountain carving, develop some new skills, and be involved with one of the coolest explosives projects out there, that just happened to be in his back yard.

Throughout his explosives career Paul always looked for ways to not only make himself better, but also the drillers and blasters he came in contact with. If someone had a question, even if you were a competitor, Paul was there. If you were a student and needed help with finding scholarships or internships, Paul was there. If you needed someone to have a beer (or two) with and share a good laugh and a story, Paul was there. Paul didn't and still doesn't, know how to say no when it came to helping others in the explosives industry and takes pride in the successes of those around him.



There are very few of us who can look back on our career and be able to have the reputation as an "expert" in our field. Being an expert doesn't come from a book or a classroom. It comes from putting in the hours on the ground, and in Paul's case, under it. It comes from failing, learning from your mistakes, and then not repeating them. It comes

from not only a job well done, but a job where you lead by example. It comes from getting your hands dirty and teaching others not only how, but why. It comes from earning the respect of those that both like and dislike you. I am confident when I say that we all look to Paul as an expert in our industry. To me Paul really exemplifies the Dyno marketing phrase "I LOVE EXPLOSIVES". He is what that phrase would look like if it came to life."

Congratulations Paul on your well-deserved recognition!




Photogrammetry Blast Design



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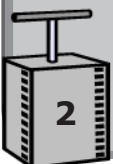
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What do you call a pony with a sore throat? A little hoarse.

*Jokes featured in gray boxes are from "Dad Jokes: The Punniest Joke Book Ever"*



## Black Hills Chapter January Membership Meeting Recap and Election Results

Black Hills Chapter of ISEE members and supporters enjoyed good food, networking, elections, speakers, and door prizes at the January Membership Meeting in Rapid City, South Dakota. It was held at the SD Mines Center for Alumni Relations and Advancement Building on January 20th.



Attendees enjoyed a social hour prior to the meeting, which was a great time to network with students and people working in the industry. Thank you to **Buckley Powder Company** for sponsoring the food and refreshments.

Elections were held at the meeting for positions on the Board of Directors. **Paul Sterk, Baron Fidler, Steve Fildes, and Joan Clements** were all re-elected, and **Brett Hunter** won the open seat. Thank you to everyone who participated and voted. We are very grateful to have hardworking and dedicated people on the BHC Board of Directors.

Chapter business items included a reminder to renew membership dues for 2023, discussion regarding the National ISEE Conference in San Antonio, and reminder to get registered and attend the Best in the West (BITW) Conference in April.



After the business items, **Alexander Bolduc** (SD Mines student) spoke about his internship experience and **Zachariah Briggs** (SD Mines student) presented "Blasting for Underground House Construction." **Eric Weyer** (Dyno Nobel) also presented at the meeting,

speaking on "Water Migration into Loaded Bore Holes." Lots of great information!

Thanks to everyone who attended. See you at BITW!

### ISEE Scholarship Program

The International Society of Explosives Engineers (ISEE) Education Foundation has opened the 2023 application process for scholarships. In 2023, the ISEE is making up to \$90,000 available in scholarships to students pursuing degrees related to the explosives industry.

To be eligible, students must be, or plan to be, pursuing a technical, undergraduate, graduate or doctorate degree in a field related to the commercial explosives industries. Interested students can find more information at [www.isee.org/students](http://www.isee.org/students)

The scholarship acceptance period is February 28 to May 15, 2023. Completed applications must be emailed to [scholarship@isee.org](mailto:scholarship@isee.org).



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## Best in the West Conference Early Bird Registration Discount Ends March 31

You are invited to attend the Best in the West Drill and Blast Conference on April 19, 20 and 21 at the Spearfish Holiday Inn Convention Center in Spearfish, South Dakota. **Early bird registration discount ends March 31<sup>st</sup>.**

The conference is a great opportunity to interact with the industry, network, see tools and techniques, and talk with the best in the business. It is a great value for training, and tools to make your operations safer and more profitable: *the best bang for the buck!*

### CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Register online or download forms at [www.bitwconference.org/register.html](http://www.bitwconference.org/register.html). Additional optional activities during the conference include a trap shoot, golf scramble, and Crazy Horse Mountain Tour.

### BLASTER CREDIT HOURS

Blaster credit recertification hours accepted in multiple states. Typically 13.5 hours of qualified subjects.

### REGULATORY PANEL

This is your chance to ask questions of your regulators and learn about industry happenings and changes. We will have representatives from MSHA South Dakota, MSHA Wyoming District 9, Institute of Makers of Explosives, ATF, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality—Land Quality Division, and State of Colorado Division of Oil & Public Safety.



### EXHIBIT HALL

Suppliers, manufacturers, engineers, and service representatives will be in attendance.

### SCHOLARSHIPS

All proceeds from the BITW support explosives and mineral industry scholar-ships. This promotes and perpetuates the mining and explosives industry. Thanks to your generosity, we gave out \$12,000 in scholarships in 2022.

### DONATIONS

To donate door prizes and/or scholarship auction items, please email [bitwconference@gmail.com](mailto:bitwconference@gmail.com). It is greatly appreciated!

### HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Spearfish Holiday Inn Hotel reservations can be made at [www.spearfishconventioncenter.com/hotel](http://www.spearfishconventioncenter.com/hotel) using group code **BIW**. You can also call the hotel to make reservations at (605) 642-4683 and mention “explosives engineers”.

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# What's Happening

Reports & News From Around the Industry

## BHC Member Dr. Purushotham Tukkaraja Receives Excellence Award from SME

Congratulations to Dr. Purushotham Tukkaraja (SD Mines Associate Professor) for receiving the Health and Safety Research and Educational Excellence Award at the 2023 Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration Inc. (SME) Annual Conference in Denver, Colorado.



Dr. PT states: "Thank you to the Health & Safety Division for this award and South Dakota School of Mines for providing me the opportunity to train the next generation of mining engineers. I would also like to thank the funding agencies for supporting my research and my mentors, collaborators, colleagues, and everyone who made it possible."

## Black Hills Chapter Wins Awards at ISEE Conference

The Black Hills Chapter of ISEE won three awards at the National ISEE Conference in Texas. The awards include: Chapter Quality Operations Award, Chapter Communications Award, and Chapter Service Award for the 2022 Best in the West Drill & Blast Conference. Great work, team!



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Why did the pie go to the dentist? It needed a filling.

## WY DEQ-LQD Blasting Program Announcements

### Wyoming Blaster Certification Class in Rock Springs, Wyoming: May 16-18

Wyoming DEQ-LQD plans to hold a Blaster Certification class on May 16-18, 2023, at the Wyoming Machinery Company in Rock Springs, WY. There is no cost for the training.

Please contact Reo Barney at (307) 675-5612 or [reo.barney@wyo.gov](mailto:reo.barney@wyo.gov) to register and confirm the number of people attending.

This class may be taken prior to the completion of the two years of blasting experience but must have a minimum of 18 months of blasting experience.



### Wyoming DEQ Webinars for Blaster Continued Education Hours Program

Wyoming DEQ-LQD has hosted a series of webinars that were previously recorded and can be used for up to 16 Blaster Continuing Education Hours (BCEH).

There is no charge for the webinars and they are available to blasters outside of Wyoming.

*The [Wyoming DEQ Webinar Program](#) has awarded over 2,300 Blaster Continuing Education Hours and 1,000 of those hours have been for blasters from states other than Wyoming and South Dakota. The furthest away the Webinars have been watched is Antarctica.*

### How the Webinar Process Works:

**Step 1:** Watch [previously recorded](#) Webinar(s) on the Wyoming DEQ Blasting Training YouTube Channel.

**Step 2:** Complete the [Wyoming DEQ Webinar Affidavit of Attendance](#). Multiple blasters and multiple Webinars can be placed on the same Affidavit of Attendance. Please indicate if a Blaster needs a Certification of Completion (not required for Wyoming Blasters).

**Step 3:** Return the Affidavit of Attendance to Reo Barney (Wyoming Blasting Program Manager) at [reo.barney@wyo.gov](mailto:reo.barney@wyo.gov) or contact by phone at (307) 675-5612 if there are any further questions. Please visit the [Wyoming DEQ-LQD Blasting Page](#) for additional information.

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## In Memoriam: Robert "Joe" Wood

August 7, 1949 — March 2, 2023

*Obituary and photo from Fidler-Isburg Funeral Chapels in Spearfish, SD; found online at [www.fidler-isburgfuneralchapels.com](http://www.fidler-isburgfuneralchapels.com)*

Robert Joseph (Joe) Wood was born to Dr. Robert M. and Edna Marie Wood on August 7th, 1949 in Chicago, IL. He died unexpectedly at his home in Spearfish, SD on March 2, 2023.

Joe attended the South Dakota School of Mines and received his bachelor's degree in geology from the University of Nebraska. He served eight years in the US Army in Germany and another 20+ years in the Army Reserve. He was happiest being out in the Black Hills, especially in Galena. He loved the wildlife, large and small, who came through his land, and he made sure they always had plenty to eat.

Joe was preceded in death by his parents. Left to mourn his passing are his sisters Claire, Anne, and Nancy, his nephew Hans, and his niece Elsa and her husband Sveinung.

A graveside service is planned for summer 2023. Arrangements are under the care of Fidler-Isburg Funeral Chapels and Isburg Crematory of Spearfish. Online condolences may be written at [www.fidler-isburgfuneralchapels.com](http://www.fidler-isburgfuneralchapels.com).

Joe was a member of the ISEE since 1986 and was active in the Black Hills Chapter. He attended meetings and served on the Board of Directors. When featured in the newsletter's Membership Spotlight in December 2019, he said he enjoyed belonging to the ISEE because he "can be with people he relates to." Joe will be missed.



## Black Hills Chapter Contacts

Here are the 2022-2023 Black Hills Chapter Officers and Board of Directors. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact one of these members. The chapter is always looking for ways to improve the mineral and explosives industry. Your suggestions are greatly appreciated.

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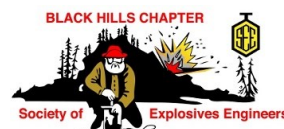
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