

# AESE Meets the Rockies

## Ginny Lowe

The 38th annual meeting of the Association of Earth Science Editors (AESE) was held at the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, Colorado, near the foot of the Rocky Mountain National Park. An excellent choice for the conference venue, the Stanley Hotel has beautiful turn-of-the-century historic buildings and scenic grounds, and the surrounding area was perfect for the roadside geology field trip.

The AESE annual meeting began with registration and a welcoming reception on 3 November 2004, and the technical sessions officially began on 4 November. The meeting was titled "Achieving the Pinnacle of Our Profession", but the theme of "how to do more with less" ran throughout the meeting. As was evident from the presentations and responses, many editors are dealing with budget cuts and changing expectations from their customers. It was helpful to hear relevant and creative ideas from our peers.

Session 1, "Establishing and Documenting Procedures for Editing and Production", was the most helpful session in providing a look at how other editors are dealing with the effects of budget cuts and concurrent increase in customer expectations. Marg Rutka (Ontario Geological Survey [OGS]) presented information on how OGS has dealt with a staff reduction of about 30% while taking on additional responsibilities. Its efforts included designing an Open File Report (OFR) Microsoft Word template for authors to use; preparing an author guideline package (in print and CD-ROM) with resources, tools, and examples of OFRs; setting digital standards for the submission of figures and photographs; and requiring authors to complete metadata forms with their submissions. Heavier author involve-

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GINNY LOWE is an offsite editor working from her home in Loveland, Colorado, for the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas.

ment has meant that less time has had to be spent in cleaning up submissions. Like other organizations represented at the AESE meeting, OGS plans to develop an intranet site to give its authors access to tools, data, and publications. Handouts of the print and CD-ROM "Author's Package" were available at the meeting.

Continuing the session, Karen MacFarlane (CS Lord Northern Geoscience Centre) discussed how her office dealt with merging with another geoscience resource to create a single, streamlined program. The change in office structure provided the opportunity to develop a more formal standard for publishing. The goal in defining the standard was to establish and maintain quality and credibility while allowing the flexibility needed to accommodate continuing changes. Gretchen Gillis (Schlumberger) presented a fascinating snapshot of how the quarterly journal *Oilfield Review* is prepared and produced. She also talked about Schlumberger's production standards and about how it handles problems with contributing authors. Jane Ciener (US Geological Survey [USGS]) presented information on how the USGS Publishing Issues Group (PIG) established an interdisciplinary team to review the types of documents processed and the levels of editing used throughout USGS. In response to in-house inconsistencies, the PIG developed recommendations for levels of editing to be used with various types of documents, from light editing of abstracts and outside articles to heavier editing for high-profile important publications. David Schleicher (Qwest) followed up with an intriguing presentation of how to use a "triage" method to apply the levels of editing to different types of documents. He focused on quick analysis of documents to determine what aspects of editing can be neglected to allow dealing with aspects that cannot be neglected to focus available resources on making the information presented as accurate, accessible, and credible as pos-

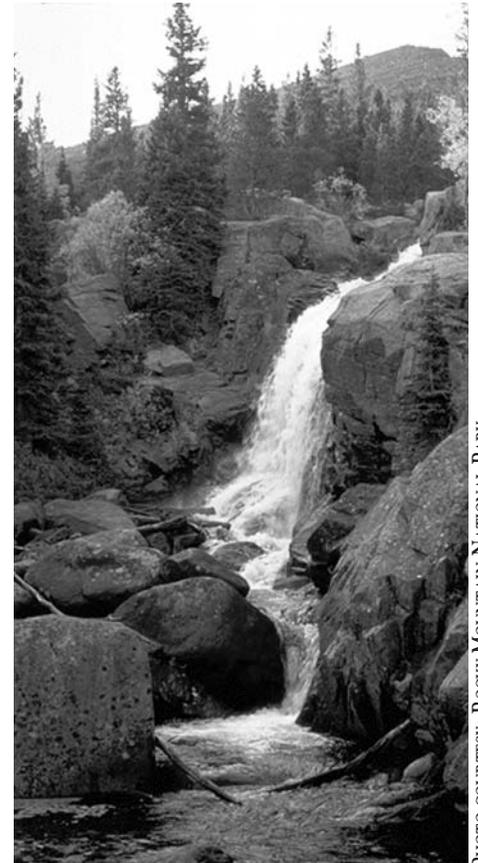


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## Alberta Falls

sible. Linda Guay (Geological Survey of Canada) concluded the first session with a presentation on International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification of publishing services, which begins with examination and documentation of an organization's current practices. The most common result of the examination is a restructuring of processes to allow the organization to streamline and become more efficient. ISO certification is not necessary to achieve those objectives, but Guay's presentation demonstrated its usefulness as a tool to guide an organization through an overall improvement exercise.

Session 4, "Developing Earth Science Publications for General or Dual General/Scientific Audiences", focused on developing data that are more easily acces-

sible to the general public. Vince Matthews (Colorado Geological Survey) presented an overview of how the award-winning publication *Messages in Stone: Colorado's Colorful Geology* was developed to reach a broad target population. Gretchen Gillis (Schlumberger) introduced the dynamic online *Oilfield Glossary*, which makes exploration and production terminology publicly accessible at [www.glossary.oilfield.slb.com](http://www.glossary.oilfield.slb.com). Christopher Keane (American Geological Institute) discussed the evolution of the publication *Geotimes* as it converted from a society membership publication to a paid-subscription publication and struggled to become self-sufficient. Kirk Johnson (Denver Museum of Nature & Science) gave a compelling presentation on popularizing geology and paleontology for the museum audience. Kirk's presentation included excellent examples of how the Denver Basin Project links paleontology and historical geology to current issues surrounding the use of a nonrenewable groundwater resource to broaden the public's interest in both. Rick Borchelt (Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research) concluded the session with a critical presentation regarding news and information needs of American science leaders. Borchelt stressed the strong trend toward use of online resources for gathering policy-relevant information, telling us that 97% of the roughly 8000 policy leaders look to the Internet for data to support their decisions.

Many of the presentations at the annual meeting described how organizations are moving toward multimedia release and allowing clients to download reports and

publications directly from their Web sites. That effort includes scanning archived print documents and making them available online.

Sessions 2 and 3 focused on the diverse backgrounds and characteristics of earth science editors, hiring a scientific editor, continuing education options for writers and editors, and marketing our services. Session 3 concluded with a breakout session for discussion of how to encourage authors of "underground published" materials (OFRs, slide presentations, posters, Web pages, and so on) to use editing services to improve their documents. Results of the breakout session are to be published in AESE's *Blueline*.

Session 5 presented innovations in earth science publishing, including discussions of print-on-demand products, open-archive forums, and dynamic reports. Session 6 presented a discussion of tools for electronic preparation of publications, including tips on using AutoCorrect in Microsoft Word, an overview of converting archival tables to readable data, and critical information on making good choices for CD/DVD-ROM products. The technical sessions concluded with a presentation by Bill Jones (Vision Graphics, Inc), showing how his state-of-the-art printing equipment works. It was interesting to see how clients can access their documents online to approve them before the printing process takes place.

Throughout the annual meeting, entries for the AESE Award for Outstanding Publication were exhibited in the conference hall. Winners were announced at the end of the conference technical sessions.

The conference concluded on 6 November with a board of directors meeting followed by a field trip titled "Roadside Geologic Discoveries in the Estes Park Region", which was a 1-day field exploration led by Jim Cole (USGS-Denver). Topics of the field trip included uplift and erosional history of the Front Range; deposition, folding, metamorphism, and melting of the oldest rocks of the Front Range; the Big Thompson flood of July 1976; the Big Thompson Project, moving water under the Continental Divide; glaciers, glaciation, and climate change in the last 2 million years; and Roaring River debris fan and other effects of the catastrophic Lawn Lake dam failure.

The AESE meeting registration packet included the *Geologic Map of Rocky Mountain National Park and Vicinity, Colorado*, by William A Braddock (University of Colorado) and Jim Cole (USGS-Denver). Also included was Cole's *Guide to Roadside Geologic Exploration around Estes Park, Colorado*, a beautiful guidebook developed for the AESE field trip, also available to Rocky Mountain National Park visitors. I strongly recommend that anyone interested in Colorado's geology obtain a copy of the Colorado Geological Survey's *Messages in Stone: Colorado's Colorful Geology* and Cole's *Guide to Roadside Geologic Exploration around Estes Park, Colorado* and do a little exploring. 🗺