



## The New York Interagency Engineering Council Newsletter



3rd Quarter, 2008

### Contents

[Technical Conference](#)

[Quarterly Meeting](#)

[Annual Luncheon](#)

### Annual Luncheon

The Annual Luncheon will be held on November 6th at the elegant Union League Club in midtown Manhattan. NYIEC member agencies are entitled to send eight staff members at no charge to this event. The keynote speaker has not yet been selected, but we'll keep you posted.



### Just For Fun

From Wikipedia...

The Monty Hall problem is a probability puzzle loosely based on the American television game show Let's Make a Deal. The name comes from the show's host, Monty Hall. The problem is also called the Monty Hall paradox, as it is a veridical paradox in that the solution is counterintuitive.

Suppose you're on a game show, and you're given the choice of three doors: Behind one door is a car; behind the others, goats. You pick a door, say No. 1, and the host, who knows what's behind the doors, opens another door, say No. 3, which has a goat. He then says to you, "Do you want to pick door No. 2?" Is it to your advantage to switch your

### Technical Conference

The 14th annual technical conference, held on June 5th at the Frank Sinatra High School in Long Island City. This we able to offer a \$30 discount for NYIEC members.

Since the theme was Designing and Building for the Future of New York City, all presentations related directly or indirectly to Mayor Blumberg's PlaNYC 2030. Although "congestion pricing" was defeated, recently adopted legislation supports the concepts included in the plan.

#### *Block the Box*

Changes the classification of obstruction of an intersection from a moving violation to a parking violation allowing all levels of Traffic Enforcement Agents the ability to issue the ticket. It also raises the fine from \$90 to \$115.

#### *Green Roof Tax Abatement*

Provides a four-year NYC property tax abatement for green roof construction.

#### *Solar Energy*

Provides a four-year NYC property tax abatement for installation of solar panels.

#### *Net Metering*

Allows residents with wind generating systems to provide energy back into the utility grid and get a credit against their own usage.

Building Information Modeling (BIM) was just one of the popular topics discussed at the conference. It provides a platform for the type of collaboration many feel is essential to build Green Buildings. To stay current Peggy Ho of the US GSA suggests visiting website at [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov). Under the Public Buildings heading, choose Design & Construction then click on 3-D-4-D Building Information Modeling. Abhi Basu, our keynote speaker suggests keeping up by participating in the many forums on the topic. One is at the ACEI website at [www.acei.org](http://www.acei.org), click on resources, and then forums. BIM is also featured in two articles of New York Construction. One is titled, Beyond 3-D: BIM Technology is Changing the Industry – Slowly, the other is titled Building a New Way to Estimate: BIM Pushes Industry to Look at New Estimating Options. There is a link to New York

choice?

Because there is no way for the player to know which of the two unopened doors is the winning door, most people assume that each door has an equal probability and conclude that switching does not matter. In fact, in the usual interpretation of the problem the player should switch—doing so doubles the probability of winning the car, from 1/3 to 2/3.

Construction magazine in the Information/Links section of the NYIEC website. To see the other presentations given at the conference, ask your delegate to view the conference CD.

Your delegates are already at work planning for the next conference. Due to the sub-prime crisis the upswing in construction costs due to local market conditions, it was mentioned that a construction economics theme might be of interest for next years conference. What do you think? What theme do you think would be of interest? Where should the conference be held? Suggestions and comments on how to improve the conference are welcome.

## Quarterly Meeting

Two interesting presentation were given by the New York Power Authority's Research and Technology Development department. The first was given by Edvina Uzunovic and covered Regenerative Energy studies at the New York City Transit Authority, and the Long Island Rail Road high-speed flywheel demonstration project. These technologies enable the capturing of energy that would normally be lost in the braking processed to be stored for later use, while at the same time reducing peak demand costs in the process. It also reduces capital costs by reducing the number/size of substations that would need to be built as rider capacity increases. The second presentation was given by Guy Sliker outlined the many green power sources of generating electrical power being utilized by NYPA including photovoltaic, fuel cell, microturbine, wind, energy storage, and biomass. The contract award for building the a working high-speed flywheel system will be July 2008. Commissioning will take place one year after contract award, in September 2009, and it will be monitoring until March 2010. If you would like to learn more about this contact your NYIEC delegate of Mike Nash at the New York Power Authority, email address is micahel.nash@nypa.gov.

Current officers at the NYIEC are:

Joseph Macaluso, Empire State Development Corporation – Chairperson

Frank Lombardi, Port Authority of New York & New Jersey – Vice Chairperson

Randolph Hunt, New York State Department of Transportation – Treasurer

Catherine Nigro, Port Authority of New York & New Jersey – Secretary

Nominations and election (provided a quorum is present) of new officers will be conducted at the next meeting on September 11th.

Standing committees report on important information on a given topic at each quarterly meeting. The current standing committees are:

*Finance*

*Design and Code Compliance*

*Environmental*

*Seminars*

*Contract Management*

*Facility Management*

*Energy Conservation*

*Education and Research*

There has not been much activity in these committees, suggesting that there may simply be too many of them, or the topics may no longer be relevant. Please let your delegate what topics you would like to see on a standing committee, and more importantly, if you

would be interested in participating in one.

### **In the News**

The sometimes controversial New York State Wicks law, which dates back to 1921, requires projects to be bid out as separate and distinct prime contracts for General Construction, Electrical, Plumbing, and HVAC. Proponents of the law claim that it helps to promote healthy competition among subcontractors and helps to level the playing field for small and minority contractors. Those opposed to the bill claim that the four individual prime contractors make coordination difficult, adding costs and lengthening the duration of projects. There are studies that support arguments for or against the law mostly depending on who conducted the study. An independent study on its impact on New York City schools by Ashenfleter, Ashmore, and Filer, conducted in 1997 concludes that on very small projects costs averaged 24% higher on Wicks projects than non-Wicks projects, on larger projects, however there were no significant cost differences. The dollar threshold where the law is applicable was last set in 1961 at \$50,000. In the New York State budget that was recently approved, this amount was increased to \$3 million dollars for New York City, \$1.5 million dollars for downstate suburbs, and \$500,000 for upstate New York.

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