Making a Case for Face-to-Face Conferencing

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Why do we conference together? In this age of smart phones, webinars, Skype, Google, and social media, we have immediate access to people and information our parents could only have dreamed about. From the comfort and convenience of our home or office, these media allow us to easily exchange ideas, data, opinion, and even solutions with ease and efficiency. A&WMA’s 108th Annual Conference & Exhibition is just over a month away, with early bird registration ending on May 21, so why take the time to register, pack a bag, and travel out of town for a week-long technical conference? Published author and blogger Phil Gerbyshak offers five reasons to attend conferences; I’ll present my spin on each.

Networking. I’ve conversed with thousands of people by phone and e-mail throughout my career, but it’s those I’ve met in person I remember the most. Putting a face to a name and a handshake to a greeting is how true business relationships begin. Having a personal, in-depth conversation with a new colleague can develop a long relationship that brings true value to your ability to accomplish your business goals.

Inspiration. This year’s keynote session will be headlined by Gina McCarthy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator. Hearing what she and others holding different viewpoints think about why something is important will allow me to make better decisions and ensure I’m heading in the right direction. Being inspired helps us perform at a higher level.

Knowledge Gathering. A&WMA’s 108th Annual Conference & Exhibition boasts over 400 presenters in course, poster, platform, panel, and symposium discussion formats, each designed to allow you to construct a customized learning track that meets your unique technical needs.

Interaction. Our Sponsors and Exhibitors will be on hand to demonstrate the innovative products and services they provide and to assist you in making wise science and engineering choices. With over 100 exhibitors, the Exhibit Hall is a great place to learn what’s new in our industry.

Knowledge Sharing. Being a member of A&WMA gives you an opportunity to tell your peers what work you do. The Annual Conference is where professional accomplishments are recognized and celebrated, and where you can gain exposure in your particular work area.

Visit http://ace2015.awma.org to register and to review the schedule of events that have been organized to deliver the highest conference value. As you will discover, this year’s program is filled with presentations, analysis, and discussion of the hot topics from the leading experts and policy-makers in our field. One such topic is the subject of this issue of EM: EPA’s proposed changes to the 2008 National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ground-level ozone. Hosting the Annual Conference in the Research Triangle Park area—the largest concentration of air policy development and research in the world—A&WMA brings top-level leadership within EPA together with other regulators and regulated industry representatives to discuss how these changing rules impact future strategies of compliance and air quality attainment.

My hope is that you are busy making plans to visit North Carolina June 22–25 and bringing with you an enthusiasm and desire to exchange knowledge and information with your peers. See you there! em