



Destination Safety

The IEEE celebrates its 125th anniversary in 2009, from beginning as the American Institute of Electrical Engineers (AIEE) over a century ago in Philadelphia. The transatlantic cable, ac or dc power, and data punch cards were existing inventions then. Did the engineers gathering in Philadelphia in 1884 realize the direction their discipline would take?

Today, the IEEE has grown to more than 1,300 technical chapters and 300 local IEEE Sections. Survey the globe, and you'll find IEEE Members everywhere with a shared mission to promote the engineering process of creating, developing, integrating, sharing, and applying knowledge about electrotechnology and information technology and sciences for the benefit of humanity.

Transcontinental scientific and technologic achievements bring our lives closer together. Yet, we recognize that innovation can be accompanied by unintended consequences spanning a continuum from beneficial to harmful. Consider how a hydroelectric station may generate needed commercial power for a populated area. The carbon footprint may be desirable, whereas the impact on nearby aquatic ecosystems may not. Obviously, we want each place to be safe, the generation facilities and the fisheries.

Our view of technology's consequences is influenced in part by our culture, heritage, location, and economy. When we address technologies and science in conference, we are traveling in the footsteps of our pioneers. Generations later, we follow their traditions.

A review of 2009 IEEE offerings shows just a few of our opportunities.

- *2–6 February:* The IEEE Industry Applications Society Electrical Safety Workshop in St. Louis, Missouri, emphasizes changing the electrical safety culture to accelerate application of breakthrough improvements in human factors, technology, and managing systems that reduce risk of electrical injuries and stimulate innovation to enable sustainable performance improvements.
- *10–13 February:* The IEEE International Conference on Industrial Technology in Churchill, Victoria, Australia, targets future technology in service of regional industry, with the aim of serving as a conduit for new technical solutions implemented regionally.
- *3–7 May:* The IEEE Industrial and Commercial Power Systems Technical Conference in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, focuses on papers addressing practical application issues in industrial and commercial distribution system design, protection, energy, codes and standards, power quality, maintenance, and safety.
- *14–16 September:* The IEEE Petroleum and Chemical Industry Committee Technical Conference in Anaheim, California, provides an international forum for the exchange of electrical applications technologies relating to the petroleum, chemical, and marine industries; safety is on the agenda in multiple sessions.
- *23–24 September:* The Electrical Safety Workshop Brazil in Blumenau Sta Catarina, Brazil,

explores topics including national technical standards for electrical installations in explosive atmospheres, commissioning facilities, risk assessment, and safety training.

- *4–8 October:* The IEEE Industry Applications Society plans its 44th Annual Meeting in Houston, Texas, with presentations spanning topics of industrial technologies, mining, pulp and paper industries, and cement industries. Papers are peer reviewed and considered for subsequent publication, significantly contributing to the IEEE libraries.

Attendance at an IEEE gathering can be a starting point to work back at the office. For example, workshop presentations and break discussions can help us customize how specific safety requirements might be implemented in the revision of our company's electrical safety program. Even if our budget doesn't allow for frequent business travel, conference papers made available online share solutions to operational challenges.

Our progress is a journey. We come from diverse nations and dissimilar experiences. We trip along varied routes. Perhaps, we go first class. Maybe, we ride the Internet highway. Roadblocks can be mountainous. Divides are sometimes crossable only by long bridges.

Geography alters our view to the horizon. Distances seem near at one turn, then far at another. The weather and terrain often slow the trek. Still, as long as we keep moving forward, greater possibilities lie ahead.

Some locations are nice to visit, and others are must see. If safety is a destination, where is it for us? In 2009, let's explore the map.

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