

INVITATION TO ATTEND



Esteemed Colleague,

I am very pleased to welcome you to the beautiful desert of Tucson, Arizona to mark a historic milestone: the 25th Annual Symposium on the Application of Geophysics to Engineering and Environmental Problems (SAGEEP).

I am honored to serve as your general chair this year, and I can't think of a more perfect setting for this momentous occasion. Whether you are a frequent traveler to southern Arizona or this will be your first visit, there is no shortage of unforgettable experiences to be had here.

Everyone has seen images of the icon of the desert southwest: the saguaro cactus. But it's quite another thing to see scores of them dotting the ridges and canyons of the Sonoran desert. Outdoor enthusiasts flock to Tucson for hiking, biking and golf, taking advantage of the 350 days of sunshine the area enjoys per year. Star-gazers love the unparalleled clear desert night sky and attendees will likely be awestruck by the distinctive, craggy Santa Catalina range – the symposium site is nestled in its foothills.

Tucson culture and cuisine are legendary, thanks to the incredibly diverse history of southern Arizona. Explore archaeological sites and petroglyphs by day and dine on world-class Mexican and other cuisines by night. Uniquely Tucson Mercados (markets) and art galleries can be found all over town. And for true explorers, the city is located just one hour from the Mexican border, two hours from Phoenix and under six hours from the Grand Canyon's south rim. Don't miss the opportunity to acquaint yourself with the incredibly unique regional flora and fauna by taking part in the conference's two field trips: attendees have the option of visiting world-renowned Kartchner Caverns, a living cave prior to its discovery in the 1970s with very unusual geological formations, and the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, a must-see for any newcomer to Tucson. The open-air museum perfectly recreates the iconic natural landscape of the region from a natural history, zoological and geological standpoint – but with living, breathing exhibits including mountain lions, javelinas, Bighorn sheep, rattlesnakes and Gila monsters.

The theme for our 2012 gathering, "Making Waves: Geophysical Innovations for a Thirsty World," is clearly a timely one – the United Nations refers to water scarcity as one of the main problems facing the world in the 21st century. But it is also perfectly suited to our setting in the semi-arid southwest. Our keynote speaker, Pulitzer Prize finalist William deBuys, will explore the topic in detail during his presentation, "Hotter and Drier: Climatic Challenges of the 21st Century Southwest," and the theme will be expanded upon throughout our five-day conference.

This year's technical program, developed by Technical Chair Gail Heath, consists of no less than 27 sessions encompassing over 200 papers and poster presentations. The depth and breadth of the topics presented is a reflection of the far-reaching practicality of near-surface geophysical techniques in numerous environmental and engineering disciplines. For the second year, joint AGU and SEG sessions will expand the discourse on a wider range of topics. Louise Pellerin, SEG special liaison, has been instrumental in organizing three joint sessions chaired by respected researchers in their respective fields.

Jeff Paine, Short Course and Workshop Chair, has organized an engaging array of short courses and workshops. The popular full day Surface Waves (MASW) short course on Saturday and the advanced, three-quarter day course on Sunday are being held before the start of the conference. A third short course on Electrical Resistivity/IP/SP for Environmental and Engineering Applications will appeal to professionals who are involved in, beginning to consider, or have oversight/review responsibilities of others currently conducting DC Resistivity, IP or SP surveys. The materials covered are intended to provide a better understanding of the strengths of 1D, 2D, 3D and 4D resistivity/IP imaging and SP monitoring methods. For the first time, a workshop focusing on the hot-button topic of hydrofracking will discuss issues of concern such as adequate water supply, monitoring of fracking operations and induced seismicity, the impact on the water-quality, and policy and regulatory questions. The Seismic Refraction workshop will explore the subject matter and algorithms related to tomographic analysis, in addition to emerging opportunities for improved refraction solutions, including full waveform and three-dimensional methods. A third workshop on shallow applications of resistivity and IP is organized by Zonge International. All three workshops are full day events and will take place on Thursday, March 29th.

As you will know by the time you read this invitation, we celebrate SAGEEP's silver anniversary this year. Be sure to attend the Ice Breaker on Sunday, the students' event on Monday and the evening gala on Tuesday as they will all showcase a sample of the regional talent, culture and cuisine. This year's luncheons - EEGS on Tuesday, and the Foundation on Wednesday – will feature outstanding speakers of great interest to our members. Our celebration coincides with the week of Zonge International's 40th anniversary – a very happy coincidence. Zonge has been a long-time supporter of our society and has planned festivities throughout the year at various conferences and symposia, and we are proud to include them in SAGEEP 2012.

March is one of the very best times to visit southern Arizona. With the warmer days of spring, wildflowers burst into colorful bloom throughout Tucson, and average daytime temperatures in March range from a balmy 72°F (23°C) during the day to a cool 45°F (7°C) overnight – although it could get considerably warmer in the sun. All visitors should pack a hat (preferably with a wide brim), comfortable shoes, layers of clothing for warm and cool temperatures, and carry plenty of water even when not exercising, due to the extremely warm, dry climate. Sunscreen is a must.

I hope you will join us and be a part of an important anniversary celebration. We look forward to a memorable SAGEEP 25th anniversary, and wish you an unforgettable visit to the desert southwest.

Moe Momayez, SAGEEP 2012 General Chair

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