First IEEE Industry Day a Big Success

BY ASHUTOSH DUTTA

In the first event of its kind, IEEE Region 1 sponsored a daylong conference on how communications and green technologies are changing the way companies do business. Held on 5 February at Telcordia Technologies in Piscataway, N.J., the Industry Day drew nearly 300 people to hear speakers present papers on cutting-edge technologies, and more people viewed a webcast of the event shown throughout the company's facilities. The day was deemed so successful that other sections and regions are being encouraged to hold their own Industry Days.

"As it celebrates its 125th anniversary, IEEE continues to demonstrate its value through high-quality educational programs that prepare its members for engineering the future," says Senior Member T.K. Srinivas, program chair. "IEEE has been striving for industry participation in its professional activities, and Telcordia is a model for leadership."

Adam Drobot, Telcordia's chief technology officer and president of its Advanced Technology Solutions group, says the event was designed to cover all the "need-to-know issues." Drobot gave the keynote talk, "Telecommunications Futures: A 360-Degree View," in which he discussed his company's process for identifying technology gaps and inventing technologies to solve business challenges.

Telecommunications and green technology were covered in two parallel afternoon tracks. Advanced communications for public safety, transformational hybrid systems, electronics in the fight against terror, location-based services, and emerging wireless technologies were among the topics covered. Featured speakers included Rich Chernock, CTO of Triveni Digital; Ibrahim Gedeon, CTO of Telus, the Canadian telecommunications company; John Kosinski, principal deputy of technology for the U.S. Army CERDEC; Jaime Moreno, senior manager of microprocessor architecture at the IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Center; Krishna Raghunandan, construction administrator (wireless) for the Metropolitan Transit Authority in New York City; and Harvey Waxman, vice president of architecture for Avaya.

Featured speakers in the telecommunications track included the professors Henning Schulzrinne of Columbia University; and Dipankar Raychaudhuri of Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J.

Green technology sessions covered the application of solar photovoltaic technology, sustainable design, and manufacturing engineering. Speakers included Clinton Andrews, director of urban planning at Rutgers's Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy; Paul Ranky, professor of industrial and manufacturing engineering at the New Jersey Institute of Technology; Dagnachew Birru, principal researcher at Philips Research; and Ed Liberty, vice president of the Dome-Tech Group.

The technical program ended with a panel discussion on "Using IEEE to Engineer Your Future," moderated by Peter Sobel, director of IEEE Corporate and Foundation Partnerships. To provide attendees an opportunity to network, the day ended with a wine-and-cheese reception at Telcordia.

NEAR PERFECT On feedback forms distributed at the meeting, attendees praised the event. "I congratulate the organizers for pulling off a near-perfect event," one wrote. "The speakers were excellent, the topics of broad interest, and the program kept pretty much on schedule. It was apparent that every little detail had been thought through."

Srinivas, who chairs the IEEE Jersey Coast Section, says the event owes its success to the hard work of IEEE staff, Region 1's management team, and members from the region's neighboring

sections, including Princeton/Central Jersey, North Jersey, New York, Long Island, and Connecticut, as well as his own.

IEEE 2008 President Lewis Terman encouraged the organizers to try to hold Industry Day events around the world as a way to foster stronger collaborations between IEEE and industry. So far, the New Hampshire Section has formed an organizing committee with the neighboring Boston and Maine sections to plan an Industry Day.

Anyone interested in holding an Industry Day should e-mail me for more information.

Presentations and photographs from Region 1's Industry Day have been posted online, and the sessions are being shown on IEEE.tv.

—Dutta, an IEEE senior member, is the industrial relations chair for IEEE Region 1 and chair of the IEEE Princeton/Central Jersey Section.