

September 27, 2010

Response to Region 3 Conference Committee Review 2003-2008

At the request of the Region 3 Director and in accordance with the Region 3 Operations Manual, Section II, Policy and Procedures, Periodic Review of Region 3 Standing Committees, the Region 3 Special Review Committee completed its review of the Region 3 Conference Committee. The review committee consisted of Dave Conner and Jim Howard as reviewers and Roy Harris as Review Committee Chair.

The following is the Final Report with responses. The previous Conference Committee Chair, Don Hill and the current Conference Committee Chair, Sean Haynes have provided a response to each recommendation and is included herein. This Final Report along with the Conference Committee Chairs' response will be presented to an appropriate future EXCOM Meeting.

During this review the following things were researched for the years 2003 through 2008:

1. The effectiveness, continued need, policies and procedures, action, composition and budget of the committee.
2. The committee goals and objectives.
3. Timely reports of accomplishments of goals and objectives.

Observations

1. 2003 Reports on file indicate that eight appropriate goals were set for the year with two goals being met, one goal being partially met, and five goals not being met.
2. 2004 Reports on file indicate that twelve appropriate goals were set for the year with one goal being met and one goal being partially met. The reports were silent on progress relative to the remaining ten goals. Available reports imply that committee attention was paid to SoutheastCon and SouthCon but not to other goals.
3. 2005 Reports on file indicate that four goals were set for the year with all goals being met. During this year, committee attention was directed to SoutheastCon and SouthCon activities.
4. 2006 Reports on file do not indicate that any goals were set for the year but that the committee focused its attention on SoutheastCon activities with reports presenting a great deal of minutia.
5. 2007 Reports on file do not indicate that any goals were set for the year but that the committee focused its attention on SoutheastCon activities with reports taking the opposite tact from 2006, i.e., presenting very little detail.
6. 2008 Reports on file do not indicate that any goals were set for the year but that the committee focused its attention on SoutheastCon activities.
7. The 12 March 2004 report stated the following: "The Conference Committee has converted its old paper and numerous electronic records to one CD formatted disk." My questions are as follows. Who updates the disk on a regular basis to ensure currency? Where does that disk currently reside? If the disk has been "misplaced", is there any

other repository that exists that includes ALL of the records that existed prior to 12 March 2004?

Conclusions

1. The objective of the Committee is “To facilitate effective and timely conference planning and execution in the Region”. Over the six-year period of reports that were reviewed, the Committee definitely accomplished this objective for the SoutheastCon Conferences but only marginally accomplished this objective for other horizontal and vertical conferences in the Region.
2. The Committee has nine, assigned responsibilities.
 - a. “Encourage Region 3 organizational units to develop conferences to meet the specialized interests of their members. Use the accumulated experience of the Region to help ensure early success of such ventures.” ➔ This responsibility has definitely been met with respect to the SoutheastCon conferences but needs attention with respect to existing and potential horizontal and vertical conferences.
 - b. “Periodically review the effectiveness of all regular conferences sponsored by Region 3 organizational units. Recommend improvements as appropriate to the conference leadership and sponsoring units. Suggest new conferences where a need is recognized and suggest termination of conferences no longer needed or posing undue financial liability.” ➔ The Committee appropriately reviews the effectiveness of Region 3 conferences sponsored by organizational units. There was no record of a need being recognized for a new conference or a suggestion that an existing conference be terminated.
 - c. “Maintain an awareness of the availability of professional conference management services and suggest the use of such services where appropriate. Give assistance in the negotiation of contracts for service. Review all such contracts where Region 3 might have financial liability and make recommendations to the Region 3 Executive Committee regarding approval of such contracts.” ➔ The Committee appears to be aware of professional conference management services and monitoring contracts and financial liability.
 - d. “Solicit invitations from Sections in Region 3 to host SoutheastCon in accordance with Region 3 Bylaws.” ➔ This responsibility has been met with “gusto”.
 - e. “Maintain the IEEE Region 3 SoutheastCon Manual and revise as appropriate.” ➔ This Manual should be updated to include current procedures in conference management to act as an up-to-date guide for future SoutheastCon Conference Committees.
 - f. “Make all conference leaders aware of potential schedule conflicts between conferences without undue concern where geography or different technical interests limit the impact of schedule proximity.” ➔ Available reports did not give the appearance that the Committee was addressing this responsibility.
 - g. “Manage the budget of the Conference Committee. Assist the Region 3 Finance committee in the preparation of the annual detailed budget of the Conference

- Committee.” ➔ While available Committee reports did not address this responsibility, my observations from auditing the operation of the Finance Committee indicate that this responsibility is being met.
- h. “Maintain historical records and obtain, develop, and keep current documentation on Region 3 conferences.” ➔ The Questions in Observation 7 above need to be answered before an assessment can be made relative to Committee performance with respect to this responsibility.
 - i. “Submit pertinent and timely conference information to the Region 3 Newsletter Editor.” ➔ This responsibility is being met.
- 3. Based upon the six-year period of reports that were reviewed, the committee changed its approach of setting broad, conference-related goals each year to focusing solely on the production of annual SoutheastCon conferences.
 - 4. The scope and responsibility of the Committee is very broad. This committee could manage this broad scope better if sub-committees were added to spread the management responsibilities.

Recommendations

- 1. The basic recommendation is that the Conference Committee be re-structured into an “oversight conference committee” with three sub-committees. This approach will allow better attention to be given to the responsibilities currently assigned to the Conference Committee and make room for more volunteer participation.
 - a. Recommend that the “oversight committee” be called the “Conference Committee” and be composed of a Conference Coordinator (i.e., Chair), a Vice Chair, and the three sub-committee chairs. The Conference Coordinator, appointed by the Region 3 Delegate/Director, will be the conference representative on the Region Executive Committee.
 - b. Clearly, a sub-committee should be structured to have the sole responsibility of oversight of SoutheastCon conference activities and maintain appropriate guidelines for conference operation. Membership on this committee should consist of an appropriate number of past SoutheastCon General Chairs and the General Chairs for selected future SoutheastCon sites. The subcommittee chair should be appointed by the Region 3 Delegate/Director in consultation with the Conference Coordinator.
 - c. A second sub-committee should be structured to have responsibility for interfacing with all other horizontal and vertical conferences and providing guidance and assistance where appropriate. The composition of the committee should be determined jointly by the Conference Coordinator and Region 3 Delegate/Director with the subcommittee chair being appointed by the Region 3 Delegate/Director in consultation with the Conference Coordinator.
 - d. A third sub-committee should be assigned the responsibility of encouraging non-Region 3 IEEE organizational units to hold additional horizontal and vertical conferences within Region 3 in cooperation with the Region and/or local Sections. This committee will have more of a “marketing function” and interface with the conference committees of the various Societies and Councils. The composition of the committee should be determined jointly by the Conference Coordinator and Region 3 Delegate/Director with the subcommittee chair

being appointed by the Region 3 Delegate/Director in consultation with the Conference Coordinator.

- e. As noted above, during recent years, Conference Committee goals have taken a “back seat” with Committee emphasis on Southeastcon conferences. If the new committee structure recommended above is adopted, each sub-committee will be better able to structure and accomplished a few focused goals each year. Toward this end, it is recommended that the Conference Committee, with or without re-organization, should concentrate on a few well-focused goals each year and report on the Committee’s progress in meeting the goal in each year and report on the Committee’s progress in meeting the goal in each Committee Report during the year.

Conference Committee Response to Review Committee Recommendations

It is agreed that the Conference Committee should have oversight of both the geographic (e.g. SoutheastCon & SouthCon) and technical horizontal and vertical technical conferences held with the Region. However, the structure of the committees and subcommittees does not need to be as complex as recommended.

It is agreed that the Conference Committee should have a Chair appointed by the Region 3 Delegate/Director. An ad-hoc SoutheastCon subcommittee already exists with the Conference Committee made up of past and current SoutheastCon Chairs. It is recommended that this committee be formalized to include as members the immediate past SoutheastCon Chair, the current year’s SoutheastCon Chair (or appointee), and the Chair (or appointee) of all approved future SoutheastCons. This subcommittee should be chaired by the Chair of the next year’s SoutheastCon (i.e. After SoutheastCon 2011, the SoutheastCon 2013 Chair would become subcommittee Chair).

It is also agreed that Conference Committee should be responsible for interfacing with other horizontal & vertical conferences within the Region. This task entails two separate tasks: 1) Supporting existing conferences, and 2) enticing IEEE OUs to hold meetings in Region 3. At this time, it is our recommendation that these do not require a subcommittee. The purpose of the Conference Committee chair is to act as the Region’s Liaison to the Panel of Conference Organizers. In this role the Conference Committee Chair is interacting with other IEEE OUs in promoting the Region for both horizontal and vertical conferences. It is also the plan of the Conference Committee to work with the Public Information Committee to publicize all conferences that are being held with the Region over the next 12 months.

Agreed. The Conference Committee should have a few well focused goals for each year. The goals for 2010 are as follows:

- Support the execution of SoutheastCon 2011.
- Support the planning of SoutheastCon 2012.
- Support the closure of SoutheastCon 2009.
- Review and present to the Region 3 Board proposals for SoutheastCon 2014 and 2015.
- Publicize and promote the Region 3’s willingness to help other IEEE OUs at the 2010 Panel of Conference Organizers in Washington, DC.

- Promote conferences being held within Region 3 via the Region website, newsletter, and e-notice as appropriate.
- Work with IEEE Conference Services to establish a database of Region 3 venues that can host potential conferences.