

## W. Joseph Helm Retires as NWESI President

After 28 years, including the last 13 leading the company, Joe is passing the torch to Tom Previsb.

### AN INTERVIEW WITH JOE REGARDING THE FUTURE OF COMMISSIONING

**Question:** Joe, you've been with NWESI for nearly 30 years. What are the biggest changes you've seen in building Commissioning in that time?"

**Answer:** When I started here 28 years ago, the Commissioning (Cx) concept was just beginning to be applied to building HVAC systems. It was an energy conservation effort and the financial savings were seen as a way to promote and pay for this newly emerging service.

At that time, it was identified as an activity that occurred near the end of construction, right before building turnover. I took on the company's first "official" commissioning project, The State of Oregon Archive Building, in 1992 and quickly learned that it is too late to realize many of the benefits of Cx if problems have been baked in during design and construction. It seemed obvious that early involvement was necessary for a Cx Authority to be successful. There also had to be "buy in" among all stakeholders, designers and contractors regarding motivation, expectations, potential benefits and cost.

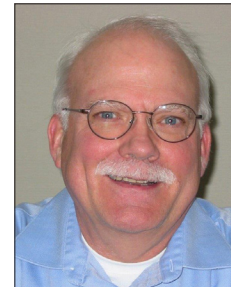
The industry now recognizes that although financial benefits are hard to quantify before a project breaks ground, arguments in favor of Cx include lessons learned and case study evidence. Confirmation is found in various areas such as: issue resolution, reductions in change orders, better system documentation, regulatory compliance, enhanced indoor air quality and occupant comfort, improved infection control in healthcare facilities, increased confidence in mission critical systems, as well as positive impacts on energy consumption and carbon footprint.

**Question:** I'm sure it's difficult to narrow down, but what are the 2 accomplishments you are most proud of during your tenure at NWESI?

**Answer:** I am proud to have helped guide NWESI from what was perceived to be just another Testing, Adjusting & Balancing firm toward being a recognized leader in improving and maintaining the performance of building systems. We have improved our technical expertise and focused on sustainability. I have been fortunate to have worked with a great group of dedicated individuals over the last 28 years.

We have become a robust professional service provider with the best interests of owners and operators informing our approach. We continue to manage potential conflicts of interest by being objective and remaining independent from design and construction efforts. We have concerns that align with those that live with a facility long after the initial project has been completed.

I also had the privilege to work at the regional and national level promoting the Cx process. Involvement in organizations such as ACG, BCA, ASHRAE, DOE and ICC/IAS has exposed me to like minded professionals and subject matter experts committed to improving the built environment. I am pleased to see



W. Joseph Helm,  
President 2003-2016



Thomas D. Previsb,  
President 2017

#### JOE'S FAVORITE PROJECTS



OHSU Hatfield  
Research Center



State of Oregon  
Archive Building



Port of Portland, Central Utility Plant

international recognition regarding the concept of Cx not only as it relates to HVAC and controls, but to other systems such as building envelope, fire and life safety, electrical, water and energy.

**Question:** You've been cultivating the next generation of leaders, both at NWESI and in related professional organizations with international reach. Where do you foresee the industry going in the next decades?

**Answer:** Building Commissioning is becoming more familiar to the industry and a common activity in new construction. It will also gain increased recognition as a valuable tool for assuring existing facilities perform as intended over time. Providing Cx as a service will become more attractive to design and construction communities. They will have important roles as commissioning team members, but in my view they should not be providing Cx services per se. The greatest benefit to the owners and operators will be to have independent 3rd party CxA's managing the commissioning process. The best way to assure system functionality and performance will continue to be a "Hands-On" approach to measurement and verification. These trends will influence codes, standards, contracting schemes, specification writing, acceptance criteria, building documentation and the training of operation and maintenance personnel.

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#### QUARTER 1 REGIONAL EVENTS



**01/31/2017 BESThQ**  
Meet and Certify  
Beaverton 3:00-5:00pm

**2/09/2017 CREW Portland**  
22nd Annual Forecast Breakfast  
Portland 7:00-9:30am

**2/15/2017 ASHRAE**  
2nd Annual Scramble Bowling  
Fundraiser  
Boise 6:00-8:00pm

**2/22/2017 ASHRAE**  
February Chapter Meeting  
Seattle 11:30-1:00pm

**2/28/2017 BESThQ**  
East side Executive Briefing  
Gresham 3:00-4:30pm

**2/23/2017 BCA / ASHRAE**  
Combined Chapter Meeting  
Seattle 11:30-1:00pm

**3/2/2017 IFMA South Valley**  
RE: think Program &  
Mountain Rose Herbs Tour  
Eugene 2:00-4:30pm

**3/16/2017 GoGreen**  
Seattle 8:00-5:00pm

\*EMAIL JEWEL BERGERON  
at [jewelb@nwesi.com](mailto:jewelb@nwesi.com) for  
more information on events  
and registration.

#### TRIVIA

Joe started at NWESI in 1989, which was certainly a monumental event for us. Here are some other important events that year:

- Tiananmen Square protests
- Destruction of the Berlin Wall
- Pete Rose was banned from pro-baseball
- Wayne Gretzky became the NHL leading scorer with 1851 points
- Batman (Keaton and Nicholson remember them?) was the top-grossing movie

#### QUIZ

**1.** Whose record did Wayne Gretzky beat to become leading scorer?

**2.** Which one of the people mentioned above said this: "If people start letting me know how old I am, and I start listening, I might start playing like an old man. So I don't listen."

SEND THE ANSWERS TO:

[nancyp@nwesi.com](mailto:nancyp@nwesi.com) by February 17. Correct answers will be entered into a drawing for prize.