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STEM Committee – Houston METRO Rail Operations Center  
Tour lead by Committee Chair Maheshwor KC for St. Ambrose Catholic School 6th Graders

✦ **January 16, 2019**  
Installation Banquet  
Officer Induction Banquet at the Hilton Post Oak with Keynote Speaker Commander of the USACE Southwestern Division, Brigadier General Paul E. Owen, P.E.

✦ **February 6, 2019**  
February General Membership Meeting  
Keynote Speaker City of Houston Council Member Jack Christie

✦ **February 16, 2019**  
Engineer’s Week – The Run of Pi  
Team of SAME runners participated
On Tuesday, January 15, 2019, the SAME STEM Committee, led by Committee Chair Maheshwor KC, organized the 5th annual Rail Operations Center (ROC) Tour for 32 sixth grade students from St. Ambrose Catholic School to the Houston METRO Rail Operations Center. Vincent Sanders, Lead Transportation Systems Planner for METRO, and Sandra Strickland, Executive assistant to Scott Grogan, Sr. Director of Rail Operations, arranged for the students to come and spend half a day learning the behind the scene actions that are done to keep Houston METRO operations running smoothly. The tour started off with a presentation on the history of METRO (The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County) and the goals of METRONext program, which was presented by Mr. Sanders. Mr. Sanders' presentation began with a description of what transportation in the Houston area was like in the early days with the horse and cart set up and continued up to the current rail system that is running today. Houston METRO has progressed so much over the years that they are rated one of the best transit system in the country. Mr. Sanders focused on how the students could possibly be a part of METRONext development as future METRO employees and contribute in Houston METRO progress.
Following the METRO presentation, the students were divided into groups of 16 and taken on a tour of the Operations Control Room (Dispatch Center), where Brian Rosette, Rail Traffic Controller - Operations explained how METRO monitors the rail cars running through the Houston area. The students were shown how the control operators communicate with the rail drivers and passengers at real-time while waiting at the stations, adjust rail switches to re-route trains around wrecks or problems on tracks, and how to tell if the trains are running on schedule. The students also got an insight on the education and skills one needs to be a control operators. After leaving the control room, the students were taken over to the maintenance center. Antonio Dominguez, Rail Maintenance Trainer showed the students where they brought the train cars in to do repairs like fix flat spots in the wheels and clean. He also took the students into the operator’s area of a train car that was there being repaired and explained to them the set up inside. Once all the tours had been completed, the students gathered together in the conference room and had lunch. Once the students had finished eating, METRO officials and SAME members interacted with students on careers they would like to pursue.

The SAME STEM Committee would like to send out a big thank you to the METRO staff, Vincent Sanders, Sandra Strickland, Brian Rosette, and Antonio Dominguez for giving the tour, and our Committee members Maheshwor KC, and Tristan Robles for helping out at the field trip. The SAME STEM Committee will be looking at participating on Scout Fair in April, 2019.
The Houston-Galveston Post kicked off the year with our Annual Installation Banquet. The Banquet was held on January 16th at the Hilton Post Oak. The night began with a cocktail reception, where both public and private industry SAME members and guests had the opportunity to network.

The annual banquet is held in January to install the 2019 Houston-Galveston Post officers. This year, the Post was excited to present the keynote speaker, Brigadier General Paul E. Owen, Commander of the US Army Corp of Engineers Southwestern Division. The Southwestern Division of the USACE covers the Galveston, Fort Worth, Tulsa, and Little Rock Districts. During his speech, Brig. Gen. Owen spoke about the upcoming projects of the USACE, focusing on the upcoming projects of the Southwestern Division. The presentation covered how disaster funds are playing a key role in making the projects possible, and what other projects were likely to be upcoming in our region.

After Brig. Gen. Owen’s speech, the Post presented the Young Member of the Year award to Janelle Reiher, and the Distinguished Member of the Year to Ed Mears. Both Janelle and Ed have served in numerous positions for the Post – and the Post would like to congratulate and thank them both for their commitments.
The outgoing 2018 Officers and Committee Chairs were then presented with the new centennial President’s coin for their work in the past year. Brigadier General Patrice Melancon then installed the incoming Officers and Directors including Bob Morgan (Secretary), Alene Efaw (Asst. Secretary), Janelle Reiher (Treasurer), Belen Valdovinos (Asst. Treasurer), Keri Garner-Hopple (VP of Programs), Pacee Bean (Deputy of Programs), Tom Martens (Past President), Wendell “Buddy” Barnes (Post Mentor), Dennis Turner (President Elect) and Yvonne Rivera (President).

Thank you to all companies who sponsored the event, and thank you again to all of the 2018 Officers and Committee Chairs for their time and commitment to the Post! The Post looks forward to continuing to work with everyone at events throughout the year.
February General Membership Meeting
By: Yvonne Hernandez

Houston/Galveston SAME Post’s General Membership meeting on February 4th hosted City Council Member Jack Christie. Councilman Christie began by expressing his appreciation for the military and military families. He himself served in the Army Reserves Medical Corps.

Jack Christie recognized that the political season affects engineering too. Noting City of Houston statistics of lane miles, bridges, water and stormwater lines, he stated the funding for infrastructure locally and nationally is critical. Funds have always been a battle: between the state and the cities for rainy day funds; negotiating for emergency relief to help with Harvey repairs and debris; controversial funding for drainage; and working on City pension issues. Mr. Christie has made an effort throughout his career to be a mediator. He was on teams that helped negotiate funds for debris pickup early in Harvey recovery, as well as overseeing the city budget being tied to pensions that helped the outlook go from bankruptcy to stability.

He expressed his admiration for past Houston leaders who had the foresight to plan the infrastructure needed for growth of Houston. His parting advice: Look to local government officials whose goal is for the city and counties to work together to save the tax payers money. Elect people you trust!

E-week – The Run of Pi
By: Alene Efaw

Mike Fitzgerald, Liz Parent, Yvonne Hernandez and Alene Efaw all attended the annual Run of Pi put on by the E-week Committee to support STEM programs. The 1k and 5k runs took place at Macgregor Park. The SAME team came in 8th place.
UPCOMING EVENTS

March 2019

March 6th
General Membership Meeting
Join us Wednesday, March 6th for our March General Membership Meeting at 11:30am at HESS Club. Join us for a presentation from Mr. Robert Barker, Deputy Director, Infrastructure & Chief Development Officer for the Houston Airport System, who will update us regarding ongoing operations and planning.

April 2019

April 3rd
General Membership Meeting
Keynote Speaker Mr. Roberto Trevino, Executive Vice President, Planning, Engineering & Construction for METRO will join SAME at the HESS Club.

National Events

For More information on upcoming National events such as elections, scholarship applications, and STEM camps, please visit the SAME National's calendar: http://www.same.org/calendar