

Chapter Reports

ACI Kurdistan Chapter Co-Organizes Earthquake Hazard Workshop

The ACI Kurdistan Chapter and the Ministry of Housing and Construction of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) co-organized a 1-day workshop, “Protecting the Kurdistan Region from Earthquake Hazards,” on February 21, 2023, at the Erbil Rotana Hotel, in the capital city of Kurdistan. The workshop was attended by the Prime Minister and representatives from various local government agencies, including the Minister of Municipality and the President of the Investment Board of KRG, engineers, academics, and stakeholders.

The workshop was in response to the devastating M7.8 earthquake on February 6, 2023, in southern Turkey near the northern border of Syria, followed about 9 hours later by an M7.5 earthquake approximately 90 km (60 miles) to the north of the first. The estimated fatalities in Turkey and Syria are more than 50,000. According to Turkish government sources, more than 200,000 buildings collapsed or were damaged severely and needed to be demolished. Additionally, over a million people have been displaced. Because most of the buildings and structures in Kurdistan are made of reinforced concrete, the ACI Kurdistan Chapter finds itself at the forefront of efforts to mitigate earthquake hazards of concrete buildings and lead such efforts.

The workshop program included several seminars covering various topics related to earthquake hazards and infrastructure resilience. One of the seminars presented during the workshop covered the topic of earthquakes and their effects on structures. Other topics included a comparison of standards and codes for seismic design of buildings, lessons learned from the M7.3 earthquake that struck the Iran-Iraq border on November 12, 2017, strategies and actions for earthquake risk reduction in the Kurdistan region, and multi-scale consequence studies for hazard impacts on structures in Iraq. The workshop also featured a seminar on keeping one step ahead of earthquake research and preparedness, highlighting the importance of early warning systems, rapid response plans, and community preparedness efforts.

The workshop commenced with a speech from the Minister of Housing and Reconstruction, Dana Abdulkareem, in which he emphasized the importance of collaboration in addressing the earthquake hazard in the region, and a speech from ACI Kurdistan Chapter President, Omar Qarani.

“I urge the ACI Kurdistan Chapter to work closely with the government to protect our citizens and infrastructure from the earthquake hazard. We need to improve our construction and design practices of new buildings and evaluate existing buildings to ensure that they do not impose life-threatening hazards to our communities,” said Abdulkareem.

Masrour Barzani, the Prime Minister of KRG, also attended the workshop, underscoring the government’s commitment to protecting its citizens and infrastructure from natural hazards. The workshop provided an opportunity for stakeholders from the construction industry to exchange ideas and collaborate on possible solutions. The workshop was covered by all major media outlets in the region.

The information shared and proceedings of the workshop will be used to draft recommendations on earthquake design and construction of buildings and structures in the Kurdistan Region.

Hot Weather Concrete Presentation a Success

Philip Brandt, Vice President of the National Business Development Group for The Euclid Chemical Company, spoke on April 12, 2023, at the ACI National Capital Chapter monthly meeting. The presentation, “Hot Weather Concrete,” was timely, as warmer temperatures would soon descend on the nation’s capital district area. Brandt highlighted the precautions to watch for and discussed the changes in both the ACI 305-20 guide and ACI 305.1-14(20) specification. He also covered items to review in a pre-construction conference. This was of particular interest to the 50 attendees.



Hot weather concrete presentation at the ACI National Capital Chapter meeting

ACI North Carolina State University Student Chapter Carries On

The ACI North Carolina State University Student Chapter decreased to two people by the end of COVID-19. However, during the past school year of 2022-2023, the Chapter was able to increase its membership to 15 members. Although its membership is relatively small, the Chapter achieved the 2022 ACI Excellent University recognition. In the semesters to come, the Chapter plans to continue to grow its membership. The ACI North Carolina State University Student Chapter was able to have eight people attend the ACI Concrete Convention –

Spring 2023 in San Francisco, CA, USA, from donations and school funding.

During the recent ACI Concrete Convention, the student members enjoyed attending committee meetings, research presentations, and networking events such as the Student and Young Professionals Networking Event and the Concrete Mixer. The students also visited the Exhibit Hall and talked with different companies, and also learned about new advancements in technology. Outside of official ACI events, the group had the opportunity to explore the city during their free time, including lunches in Chinatown, dinners by the waterfront, and taking the cable car back to the hotel.

Two Chapter members, Paul Acuna and Samuel Valmassoi, interviewed as finalists for ACI Foundation Fellowships during the convention. After the convention concluded, Acuna was awarded the Barbara S. and W. Calvin McCall Carolinas Fellowship, and Valmassoi was awarded the JoAnne K. and Cecil L. Jones Carolinas Fellowship for the 2023-2024 academic year.



ACI North Carolina State University Student Chapter members at the ACI Concrete Convention in San Francisco, CA, USA

In addition to ACI-related events, the Chapter also partnered with local American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI) chapters to participate as a group in a fundraising event for Habitat for Humanity. This event was held to raise money for the organization to build a house and also to bring awareness to homelessness.

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