

# NARTE's 20 Years of Credentialing Excellence

The National Association of Radio and Telecommunications Engineers, Inc. (NARTE) was founded as a non-profit membership/certification organization in 1982. With the advent of deregulation and the Federal Communications Commission's "encouragement" for private industry to establish certification standards to fill the licensing void, NARTE initiated and developed a comprehensive certification program for engineers and technicians.

In the first edition of the NARTE Newsletter, printed in July, 1983, it was reported that "substantial activity" by NARTE had taken place since the organizational meeting in Portland, Oregon the previous September. Those activities included a membership drive during which the first advertisements and mass mailings were made. As a result, by July 4, 1983, NARTE had approximately 1,000 requests for membership applications, which exceeded the expectations for the initial membership drive for this new association.

Regarding legislative matters, on June 20, 1983, NARTE submitted comments to the FCC concerning docket 83-322. The comments objected to the elimination of licensing of individuals by the FCC. NARTE wrote that, "Should the FCC eliminate licensing, the Commission should certify private entities, such as

NARTE, to provide certification." Meanwhile, NARTE's Certification Committee was hard at work developing the structure for the certification process. This was to be presented to the FCC when approval could be granted by the FCC for NARTE to provide certification and testing. And the rest is history.

NARTE has now been in the engineer and technician certification business for 20 years. Expanding certification activities into different telecommunications disciplines has kept pace with changing technologies over the years. The certification of Electromagnetic Compatibility/Electromagnetic Interference (EMC/EMI) engineers and technicians by NARTE was added by memorandum of agreement (MOU) with the U.S Navy in 1988. Electrostatic Discharge (ESD) certification support for the ESD Association was added in 1994, and the Association of Access Engineering Specialists (AAES) teamed with NARTE in 1997.

This issue of *NARTE News* is dedicated to the NARTE Board members, officers and staff who over the last 20 years have pulled, pushed and shaped NARTE into the successful organization it is today. NARTE is strong and still growing. Your Board, officers, and the NARTE staff are busy planning for the next 20 years of support and service to an increasing membership. A message from NARTE's President, Mr. Jim Wickham, follows.

## NARTE's President Recounts 20 Years of Organized Growth and Success

NARTE's roots are in telecommunications, with over 60 percent of our membership still in telecommunications. NARTE was formed in September of 1982, out of a sincere desire to improve the telecommunications industry. The FCC had dropped competence testing for telecommunications practitioners and the forming group was genuinely concerned about maintaining some standard of practice. I was fortunate enough to be provided a copy of the first NARTE newsletter. That newsletter was four pages long, typed on 8 1/2 x 11 inch paper, and a valiant attempt to bond the membership through a common body of knowledge. In the formative years the membership remained telecom-oriented until around 1988, when a representative of the Navy asked NARTE to consider establishing a certification for electromagnetic compatibility. That was a major turning point in NARTE's history. We could have elected to stay exclusively with telecom or we could branch out and grow. We chose the latter. In so doing, we began a journey into other technological disciplines carrying forward the same "recipe" for demonstrating competence.

This is by no means the end of the journey, but rather only a way stop at which we should assess where we are and where we are going. Here we are now after 20 full years of operation. That 20 years has seen us evolve from a single interest to a credible credentialing process that can be applied to any discipline. We have five different certification programs in place and a sixth about to launch. Our credentials, based on the combination of education and work experience, peer endorsement and examination, are accredited by ICAC and accepted worldwide. We have, for example, substantial representation in Japan.

Currently, the world of telecommunications is in chaos. The old business model of charging for distance no longer works. In telecom, 80 percent of the current traffic is data, but 80 percent of the revenue comes from voice. And while the telecom infrastructure has been sustained by a century of charging by time and distance, it seems apparent that speech travels essentially free over the Internet, regardless of distance. The business model will change. More importantly, the infrastructure is sound and will remain. The

telecom businesses will reorganize, merge or sell off assets as necessary to rebound. In so doing, they will adhere to the concept that professional credentials attesting to competence in narrow specialties is just good business. NARTE embraces this approach toward maintaining professional excellence.

Just as other segments of industry are now asking for high quality credentials, so will telecommunications companies publicly state, "We recognize the value of NARTE certification and encourage our technical staff to achieve this important measure of experience, education and ethical professional practice."

*Jim Wickham, President*

## In This Issue

### Articles:

<i>A Tough Act to Follow</i> , by Jeffrey Kosseff, <i>The Oregonian</i> .....	6
<i>Everything Old Is New Again</i> , by Don Kimberlin, NCE .....	10
<i>The Electrostatic Discharge (ESD) Packaging Dilemma</i> , by Gene Chase, NCE .....	12
<i>Those Pesky 10 Questions - How To Write Them</i> , by Russell V. Carstensen, PE, NCE ....	16

### Features:

Headquarters Highlights, <i>Fall 2002</i> .....	3
Marconi-Bell Award Recipients .....	8
Column: <i>EMC Postcards: From the Wireless Side</i> , by David Case, NCE .....	9
Members Granted Senior Status in 2002 .....	9
National Service Award Recipients .....	14
NARTE Committees .....	19
Letters to the Editor .....	22

