

Educate Yourself



By Jimmy Eanes

IECA is approved as authorized provider of CEUs

The International Erosion Control Assn. (IECA) recently was approved as an International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) Authorized Provider of CEU (continuing education unit) credits. IACET is a standards-setting organization for continuing education and training. Its mission is to promote and enhance quality in continuing education and training, and its authorized provider (AP) program allows organizations like IECA to benchmark their education and training to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). By becoming an IACET AP, IECA has demonstrated that its continuing education program and the implementation of processes comply with internationally recognized standards. Consumers trust IACET CEUs because they know that the APs' processes must follow the ANSI/IACET Standard for Continuing Education and Training. As an IACET AP, IECA passed the rigorous Authorized Provider Accreditation process and has been thoroughly assessed by a third party.

IECA continues to improve the quality of its education programs through attendee feedback. Course attendees increasingly seek a national CEU approval status for classroom hours. Members and non-members who attend IECA's live and online courses often are in need of continuing education hours. Instead of offering a verification of attendance, which generally comes in the form of a professional development hour certificate, it has been discovered that many of the attendees are in search of a more quantifiable accredited document. This led IECA to look into a national standard for offering CEUs. For IECA, this means many of the approval processes for courses will go through a

more thorough process of assessment than they have in the past. This process will be implemented for any class that offers an IACET CEU as IECA complies with the IACET standard. The education leadership team feels this is an important step toward continuing to improve IECA education.

IECA staff and its board of directors have gone through a two-year process of applying for AP status. The standard is onerous and will require significant changes in how they approve and assess content to meet CEU standards. Much of what is required is already in place and has been for years; the changes for implementation will be incremental and primarily impact the instructors. IECA education staff has already set a timeline for meeting the standard requirements. Initially, the staff will assign IACET-approved CEU credit to all full-day courses for the EC16 conference in San Antonio. Then, at EC17 in Atlanta, staff will apply the standard to full- and half-day courses. Eventually, the goal is to have all IECA education, including online training, vetted through the process and eligible for CEU credit.

Finally, it is important to understand that IECA's long history of quality education will remain unchanged; it is the process of delivering that content that will be improved. Now, with the full support of IECA's board of directors and the Professional Development Committee, the association is looking forward to implementing this new standard of education delivery and expects its status as an AP to draw more industry groups to its continuing education. **SWS**

Jimmy Eanes is director of education for the International Erosion Control Assn. Eanes can be reached at jimmy@ieca.org.