



August 1, 2007

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:**

Pamala Silas

Executive Director

505/ 765-1052, x111

## **THE AMERICAN INDIAN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING SOCIETY (AISES) ANNOUNCES THE 2007 PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS**

At a time when the National Science Board, the independent government panel that oversees and sets policy for the National Science Foundation, is reporting a “troubling decline” in the number of U.S. citizens training to become scientists and engineers, AISES is doing its part in keeping the U.S. competitive in science and technology. Throughout history Native Americans have made significant contributions to this country in the science, engineering, technology and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Today, AISES is continuing this tradition by increasing the number of American Indians and Alaskan Natives in the STEM fields. As part of fulfilling this mission, AISES is delighted to announce the recipients of the fourth annual AISES Professional Awards for American Indians and Alaskan Natives. The awards are presented to science, engineering and technical professionals in recognition of their outstanding accomplishments as leaders, innovators and role models. The 2007 AISES Professional Award recipients are:

### **Professional of the Year Award: Lorena Hegdal**

Lorena A. Hegdal, Inupiaq Eskimo, originally from Nome, started her engineering career working for the Alaska Department of Transportation (DOT). She remained at DOT for 24 years where she held a number of positions ranging from work in buildings and energy research, to designing airports, roads, and buildings. Alyeska Pipeline Service Company (APSC) recognized her skills and Alyeska President Kevin Hostler saw in her a leader with integrity, experience and due-diligence and quickly tapped her as a key advisor to lead the engineering function for the Trans Alaskan Pipeline System (TAPS). A civil engineer for 31 years, Hegdal has risen to the top engineering position at Alyeska Pipeline, Engineering Director. Hegdal supervises the engineering operations for the 800 mile pipeline that stretches across Alaska and the Valdez Marine Terminal, where tankers are loaded with crude oil for shipment to refineries on the west coast of the United States. APSC is responsible for transporting 16% of the west coast crude oil supply. This is a large responsibility. Hegdal copes with challenging terrain and extreme weather conditions as well as maintaining regulatory compliance to ensure the safety and integrity of the system.

### **Executive Excellence Award: Gary Bishop**

Following in the footsteps of his father and many Native Americans, Gary M. Bishop, White Earth Ojibway, joined the military to begin his road to success. However, rather than enlisting, he was appointed to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY, where he earned his first engineering degree. Bishop is a volunteer for the Fort Apache Heritage Foundation and the executive champion for the Native American affinity group at Boeing, which he hopes will have a strong presence at the company. He is director of the United States Army Apache Longbow programs for Boeing in Mesa, Ariz., home of the AH-64D Apache Longbow combat helicopter and a variety of military support programs. These programs include the remanufacture of 597 US Army AH-64As to the new configuration AH-64D Longbow Apache with a combined Boeing value of \$6.0 billion. During his 31 years in the aviation industry, Bishop has held management positions in a variety of areas, including international, congressional, digitization, simulation, experimental flight test engineering and electronic warfare. Bishop holds a bachelor’s degree in engineering from the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, NY, a master’s degree in aeronautical engineering from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, and a master’s degree in national security and strategic studies from the U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI. He also is a graduate of the Program Manager’s course at the Defense Systems Management College, Ft. Belvoir, VA. Bishop retired from the U.S. Army in 1995, where he led aviation, armor and infantry units as well as assignments in the acquisition corps during a 20-year career. Bishop is married to Elizabeth Fliedner Bishop and has two children.

### **Technical Excellence Award: Dr. Stanley Atcitty**

Stanley Atcitty, Diné, is an electrical engineer at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The combination of his incredible technical accomplishments, his personal leadership qualities and contributions to the nation's energy security challenges has earned him the 2007 AISES Technical Excellence Award. Stan is an internationally recognized expert in the area of power conversion systems, research and development, and understanding of the system-level performance of electrochemical capacitors and is often called upon to give technical advice, presentations, and consultations. In 2003, Stan received the prestigious R&D 100 Award from *Research and Development* magazine for the Emitter turn-off thyristor (ETO). The ETO was one of the 100 most innovative products of the year.

Dr. Atcitty's work is well documented in peer reviewed journals, patents, patent applications and presentations to academia, government and industry audiences. Stan is well published in 30 publications and has more in progress. As a role model, Stan has made presentations that focus on his experience as a successful Native American professional to college-bound high school students and entry-level college students. He has inspired many Native American students to pursue technical degrees and to strive for success in their own lives. Atcitty received his bachelor's and master's degrees in electrical engineering from New Mexico State University, and his PhD from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Atcitty is married to Lisa Atcitty and has four children.

### **Most Promising Engineer/Scientist Award: Tara Astigarraga**

Tara Astigarraga, Choctaw, was a Communication major at the University of Arizona when AISES introduced her to software engineering. Today, Astigarraga works as a software engineer for IBM's Systems and Technology Group in Tucson, Arizona. She is responsible for testing IBM TotalStorage and eServer products together in a Storage Area Network (SAN) environment. Astigarraga received her bachelor's degree in Communication & Spanish Linguistics from the University of Arizona and her master's degree in Computer Information Systems from the University of Phoenix. Tara is involved in encouraging Natives to pursue careers in technology and plays a key role in launching programs to bring technology and training to Native American students.

AISES is happy to provide contact information for Professional of the Year Award winner for interviews, upon request.

The 2007 Professional of the Year Awards will be presented at the 29<sup>th</sup> AISES Annual National Conference. **MISSION: SUCCESS** is the theme of this year's National Conference to be held on November 1-3, 2007 in sunny Phoenix, AZ. Each year, our conference attracts attendees from the extensive AISES membership network which includes over 3,000 active members, 15,000 alumni, 805 Sequoyah (lifetime) Fellows, 160 College Chapters, and 200 K-12 Affiliated Schools. In all, members from over 200 Native Nations are represented within AISES. This is the largest American Indian National Conference, where hundreds of corporations, federal agencies and universities meet Indian students and professionals eager to learn about career opportunities. The 3-day event includes a Career Fair, dynamic nationally recognized speakers, panel discussions, and workshops for students, teachers and professionals. The event is capped with a traditional dinner and cultural event where all attendees come together in celebration.

AISES is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to substantially increase the representation of American Indian and Alaskan Natives in engineering, science and other related technology disciplines.

Visit the AISES website: [www.aises.org](http://www.aises.org). Press packets will be available on-site. For information about the AISES National Conference, please contact Cristy Davies at [cristy@aises.org](mailto:cristy@aises.org) or (505)765-1052 x 108.

###