

Fed Economist to Speak December 13, 1988

America's Infrastructure and Productivity

A six-car collision on Tampa's two-lane Howard Franklin Bridge (the locals call it the "Frankenstein") causes a three-hour traffic jam during rush hour. A dam bursts near Toccoa, Georgia, killing 39 residents — mostly children — of a tiny Bible college. A bridge collapses on Interstate 95 in Connecticut, hurling six people into the river some 75 feet below, killing three and injuring several others.

Are these accidents and disasters related? Our luncheon speaker, David Alan Aschauer, a senior economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, makes the case that they are and that the common denominator among them is a decaying U.S. infrastructure. However, these accidents and their causes are related to a more troubling and important phenomenon. This, according to our speaker, is a decline in U.S. productivity growth. He relates recent trends in public works expenditures and the fall-off in those expenditures to the long-term decline in U.S. productivity beginning in 1970. This research has important implications to our future standard of living and can influence how our government decides to spend money.

David Alan Aschauer is the author of a number of academic articles on various topics of macroeconomic theory and policy, with emphasis on government expenditure and tax policy. He has been an Assistant Professor of Economics at the University of Michigan, a Visiting Professor of Economics at Northwestern University, and a Visiting Research Scholar at the Institute for Fiscal and Monetary Policy Studies, Japanese Ministry of Finance. He is currently at work on a book sponsored by the Twentieth Century Fund dealing with America's infrastructure needs.

The luncheon will be held on Tuesday, December 13, at the Midland Hotel, 172 West Adams at LaSalle. For reservations, please call Brian Wesbury at 606-1448 by December 9. If you

make reservations and are unable to attend, please let Brian know as the Chapter must pay for luncheons prepared for no-shows.

The cost is \$20 for members and \$22 for non-members. The Chapter's Lucille Derrick Fund will pay for the students who wish to attend.

Statistician of the Year

The Chicago Chapter is extremely pleased to announce that Dr. Harry Roberts of the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business has been selected as the Statistician of the Year. He will be honored and will speak at our May 1989 luncheon.

Software Fair

The Chapter is planning a Software Fair, tentatively scheduled for late May 1989 at Amoco Corporation. Attendees will be able to examine a wide variety of statistical packages from many disciplines. Packages will be available for purchase at special discounted rates.

Much work needs to be done before this fair becomes a reality. Anyone willing to serve on a committee, please call Linda Clark at 798-0677.

Spring Conference

The topic for this year's conference is "Statistical and Actuarial Aspects of the AIDS Outbreak." It will be held in early April 1989. Further details will be forthcoming.

Chapter Directory

Distribution of the new Chapter Directory is expected within the next several months.

Career Forum Held

Approximately 75 students and faculty members from three states talked with statisticians from the Chicago and Northeastern Illinois Chapters at the Careers in Statistics Forum on November 17. Harry Roberts of the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business delivered the keynote address. He discussed the Challenger disaster, and showed how available data on O-ring failures could have led to a decision not to launch in cold weather if the data had been examined by someone with a trained statistical eye. Regardless of their chosen field, he encouraged the students to give heavy weight to organizational cultures, and approach companies that are oriented to basing decisions on data and evidence, not authority.

The keynote address was followed by round-table discussions, where students moved from table to table learning about different fields where statistics is applied. The students were very enthusiastic, and the round-table discussions were still going strong at 6:00, the official closing time of the forum, 1½ hours after the start of the discussions! Thanks to all the members of both Chapters who made this forum a real success.

Box is Coming!

We are pleased to announce that distinguished scholar and author George E. P. Box will be the featured speaker at our upcoming workshop on extending the quality and productivity movement beyond conventional manufacturing and service applications. The workshop will be held on Friday, February 3, 1989 at the Westin Hotel. For further information, please contact Richard Smiley at 856-5923.

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Materials for publication should be submitted to the editor at Sears, Roebuck and Co., Dept. 753, BSC 44-12, Sears Tower, Chicago, IL 60684.

Parameter offers a free placement service for ASA Chicago Chapter members. Job applicants should send a draft of their advertisement and a resume to the editor at the above address. Applicant names will remain confidential if requested.