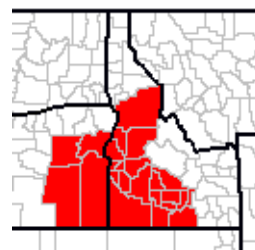




# IEEE Boise Section Newsletter November 2011



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## Upcoming Events

### December 8, 2011 – Power and Energy & Industrial Applications Society Technical Event

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: Idaho Power Company CHQ Auditorium East

**Topic:** “Data, Power and Control: Some thoughts as the Smart Grid Takes Shape”

**Guest Speaker:** Dr. John Gardner

It's been a long time coming, but the form of the Smart Grid is starting to emerge from behind all the smoke and mirrors. From Idaho Power's Advanced Metering Infrastructure project to the sweeping Smart Grid Demonstration project being managed by the Pacific Northwest National Lab throughout the Northwest, some interesting trends are visible. In this talk, Dr. Gardner will examine a few examples of the new potential of the smart grid as well as some of the research project currently underway at the CAES Energy Efficiency Research Institute (CEERI).



Dr. Gardner is a professor of mechanical and biomedical engineering at Boise State University and Director of the Energy Efficiency Research Institute, a multi-institutional program that is part of the Center for Advanced Energy Studies at the Idaho National Laboratory. John chairs the Campus Sustainability Advisory Board (CSAB), a campus-wide body that coordinates and promotes sustainability practice, education and research at Boise State. He served as chair of the Boise State Mechanical & Biomedical Engineering department from 2001 through 2007 and has published more than 40 refereed research papers and 2 textbooks. John is a registered professional engineer in Idaho. Prior to his appointment at Boise State, Dr. Gardner spent 13 years on the faculty at Pennsylvania State University in University Park where his research in dynamic systems and controls led to publications in diverse fields from railroad freight car dynamics to adaptive control of artificial hearts.

## February, 2012 – Boise Section Engineer's Week Banquet

Time: TBD

Location: TBD

The IEEE Boise Section will be holding its Annual Banquet the week of Feb. 19-25, 2012 in honor of National Engineers Week (see [www.eweek.org](http://www.eweek.org)). The 2012 Banquet speaker will be Dean Klein, VP of Memory System Development at Micron Technology in Boise. The Section is looking for volunteers to serve on the Banquet Committee as well as someone to act as Chair of the Committee. Serving on the Banquet Committee is a marvelous opportunity to network with other Boise-area professionals. If you are interested in chairing or participating in the Committee, please contact Chris Gunning at [cgunning@ieee.org](mailto:cgunning@ieee.org).

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## **Announcements**

### IEEE Boise Section 2012 Officer Elections

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for being an IEEE member. It has been my pleasure to serve as your Boise section chair this year.

It is time to vote for your 2012 IEEE Boise section officers. Eligible voting members are members within the Boise section with a membership grade of Graduate Student Member (GSM) or higher as of November 1st. The voting site is at <https://voting.vtools.ieee.org/>. Please visit this site to vote.

We are using the IEEE vtools voting system for our election. This tool helps us ensure that your voting rights are protected and that you can be confident that your vote is accurately cast and tabulated.

The section OpComm elected positions are Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. The candidate biographies are on the voting site. Please select one candidate for each position or specify a write-in candidate. The deadline to vote is midnight MST on November 30th.

Contact me at [cgunning@ieee.org](mailto:cgunning@ieee.org) if you have a question, comment, or complaint regarding your voting experience.

A quick note on other positions in the OpComm:

We've been fortunate to have several members volunteer recently to fill non-elected positions next year, but we still have some key positions we're trying to fill. The time commitment for most of these positions is just a couple hours per month. You can also volunteer to be an "at large" member of the OpComm. Volunteering is a great way to network with other engineers, get positive visibility and leadership experience, and make a contribution to the community. Please contact me if you are willing to volunteer.

Thank you,  
Chris Gunning

IEEE Boise Section Chair

### Future City Competition – Call for Judges

The 8th Annual Idaho Future City Regional Competition is fast approaching with the competition being held on January 21, 2012 at BSU. We are looking for judges to help evaluate the computer city design, essay/abstract, city model, and/or presentation.

The National Engineers Week Future City Competition is a program for 6th, 7th and 8th graders, where teams of students design and present their vision of what a city of the future should look like. Teams work with teachers and engineering mentors to create their city using SimCity software. They take into account factors such as energy needs, traffic density, pollution levels, and other real-life design considerations. They also build a model of their city, write an essay on a designated topic, and present the whole package to a panel of judges.

If you are able to help us with this worthwhile competition, in your response please include what area(s) you would be willing to judge as well as your company name and job title. We only ask that you do not have a child entered in the competition and are not currently mentoring a team. If you would like more information please visit either website listed below and feel free to contact me with and questions or comments that you may have.

Thanks,  
Erika Bowen

Idaho Regional Judging Coordinator  
National Engineers Week Future City Competition  
<http://www.futurecity.org/idaho>  
<http://www.futurecity.org>  
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## Idaho Congressman Leads High-Skill Immigration Debate

By Russ Harrison

Freshman Idaho Representative Raul Labrador (R-ID) has introduced a bill that would radically affect some international students. Labrador's bill would allow STEM graduate students to transition directly to a green card after graduating. This reform would speed up the citizenship process for all international STEM students, reducing their dependence on the H-1B visa in the process.

H.R. 3146 would exempt certain students from the EB visa cap. This would allow these students to get an EB visa, a type of green card, shortly after earning their degree. To qualify, students would have to:

- Earn a Masters or Ph.D.,
- In a STEM (science, technology, engineer or math) field,
- From an American university, and
- Have a job offer from an American company related to their field.

Rep. Labrador's bill eliminates country cap restrictions from the EB program, ensuring that all international students are treated the same regardless of which country they are from. The bill also imposes a fee on companies hiring students through this program. Funds generated from this fee will be channeled towards STEM education programs in the United States from elementary school up through college.

The bill, the American Innovation and Education Act (H.R. 3146), was introduced by Congressman Labrador in early October. It has attracted five cosponsors, including four additional freshmen Republicans. Rep. James Sensenbrenner has also signed onto the bill. Sensenbrenner is a former Chair of the House Immigration Subcommittee and a senior member of the Republican caucus.

Congressman Labrador explained his reasons for introducing this bill by saying:

"I looked at the different ways that have been proposed to fix this problem and have introduced a specific, targeted bill to help people who have offers of employment but face a processing backlog that can stretch for a decade or more. When foreign STEM students leave after graduating, their innovations are lost to our economy, leaving Idaho's high tech industry at a disadvantage compared to the rest of the world. This bill will also pave the way to encourage more interest in the STEM fields from our domestic students, who make up a decreasing proportion of current graduate students. It ends the brain-drain, helps American students and helps domestic companies maintain their edge in the global economy." – Congressman Labrador

As the Congressman suggested, graduate STEM students with degrees from American universities are in high demand globally. Most will find good jobs, even in this difficult economy. It is in America's best interest for them to find jobs here, rather than in another country. People with advanced STEM degrees are among the most innovative, productive and entrepreneurial people in the world. Inviting more of them to become Americans will create jobs and economic growth in our country, helping all Americans.

Moreover, by giving these students green cards shortly after they earn their degrees, rather than making them wait several years, Rep. Labrador's bill will keep them off of the H-1B visa. Unlike the EB visa, H-1B visas are not green cards and do not give workers using them residency rights. Without these rights, workers depend upon their employers for their legal right to stay in this country. This allows some employers to exploit H-1B workers by paying them less than American, withholding benefits, and forcing them to work longer hours than their American colleagues.

Once workers get their green cards, however, they become permanent legal residents of the United States. Since their legal status is permanent, green card holders can simply quit if they are not treated fairly by their employer. This levels the playing field with American workers, protecting both.

H.R. 3146 bill is based on a similar, but broader, piece of legislation introduced by Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) called the IDEA Act (H.R. 2161) that is backed by prominent Democrats. While the STEM provisions are identical in the two bills, the IDEA Act includes provisions to expand low-skill immigration that Republicans wouldn't support.

IEEE-USA and IEEE members have been working for over a decade to convince Congress to reform our nation's high-skill immigration system. While we have prevented Congress from making things worse, there has been little appetite on Capitol Hill for actually improving the system. In fact, despite lots of noise and effort, Congress didn't even draft a real immigration reform bill in the last Congress.

Reps. Labrador and Lofgren have broken this impasse. While compromises still have to be made before a final bill can become law, high-skill immigration reform is much more likely to pass during this Congress than at any point in the past several years.

IEEE members who have questions about high-skill immigration reform should contact IEEE-USA staffer Russ Harrison at [r.t.harrison@ieee.org](mailto:r.t.harrison@ieee.org) for more information.

## IEEE PES Plain Talk in Las Vegas

The IEEE Power & Energy Society will be holding a series of Power Industry Education courses in Las Vegas in December. These courses are called "Plain Talk About the Electric Power Industry," and are a 3-day series of courses targeted to professionals who work in or with the industry. You can read more details about the courses here: <http://www.ieee-pes.org/plain-talk-lasvegas-2011>.

## IEEE Boise Section Members Recognized as Senior Member of Technical Staff

Congratulations to the following IEEE Boise Section Members whom Micron Technology's Technical Leadership Program (TLP) has recognized on Oct. 31, 2011, as Senior Member of Technical Staff (SMTS) at Micron Technology:

Steven K. Groothuis  
Freddie W. Smith

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## **Notes:**

### Company Liaisons

Do you work at a company that employs engineers within our section? We invite each company to have one 'Company Liaison' to join our section's operational committee. The main responsibility of these people is to provide a point of contact to send information from the section Operations Committee to members working at these companies and to return information as to how the needs of their engineers can be met by the section. Company Liaisons are included in email discussions from the OPCOMM, and are encouraged to help advertise section events to members and non-members at their place of employment beyond the section newsletters. They are invited along with all the section members to attend OPCOMM meetings and give us input. If you are interested in being a company liaison, please contact Chris Gunning ([cgunning@ieee.org](mailto:cgunning@ieee.org)).

## Do We Have Your Correct E-mail?

If you haven't been receiving the newsletter or event notices electronically, check what we have for your email address on your mailing label. Please notify both the IEEE ([address-changes@ieee.org](mailto:address-changes@ieee.org) or <http://services1.ieee.org/membersvc/coa/intro.htm>) and the Boise Section Chair ([cgunning@ieee.org](mailto:cgunning@ieee.org)) so we can add you to our electronic mailing list (we get address corrections only once a month from the IEEE). Plans often come about for events between newsletters. To assure that you get timely information about IEEE Boise events, please make sure we have your correct email address in our address database.

## Your 2011 Officers:

### IEEE Boise Section:

Chair: Chris Gunning  
[cgunning@ieee.org](mailto:cgunning@ieee.org)  
Vice-Chair: Shyam Surthi  
[ssurthi@micron.com](mailto:ssurthi@micron.com)  
Secretary: Kristen Hopper  
[kmmcnair@ieee.org](mailto:kmmcnair@ieee.org)  
Treasurer: Gary Ashton  
[gra\\_tx@yahoo.com](mailto:gra_tx@yahoo.com)  
Membership: Jaydip Guha  
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GOLD Chair: Sean Collison  
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### Boise Computer Society Chapter:

Chair: Denise Korman  
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### Student Branch at Boise State University:

President: Jason Archer  
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### Region 6 Northeast Area Chair:

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