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Spring National Meeting: Keeping Focused

Returning to the petrochemical heartland after a six-year absence, the 2007 Spring National Meeting arrives in Houston on April 22–27. The timing couldn't be better. Energy — whether conventional fossil fuel-based or alternative (e.g., solar, wind, bio, etc.), as well as its impact on the environment — will be one of the critical topics of discussion.

Making its debut at this year's meeting is a vibrant programming structure suited for today's busy professional. To accentuate the areas that chemical engineers are addressing, each day of the meeting will be highlighted by a focused theme:

• **April 23, Monday — Fossil energy and CO₂ sequestration** — features the Fuels and Petrochemicals Div.'s plenary session with Carl Bauer, director of the National Energy Technology Laboratory, as the keynote speaker. Other sessions related to this topic include: the conversion of coal and gas to liquids; integrated gasification combined cycle (IGCC); liquefied natural gas (LNG); fuel cells; and the latest breakthroughs in CO₂ sequestration. Complementing this focused theme is the AIChE/SPE Heavy Oil Workshop (Apr. 26), which brings together the upstream and downstream elements of oil production and processing.

• **April 24, Tuesday — Safe and reliable energy supply** — features Dan Arvizu, director of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, as the keynote speaker at the Spring National Meeting luncheon sponsored by Saudi Aramco. Rounding out this theme are sessions on: biomass fuel conversion technologies; opportunity crudes upgrading; olefins energy management; synthetic fuels and chemicals from unconventional resources; and a toolbox for energy efficiency.

• **April 25, Wednesday — Operations and reliability** — featured sessions include: heat exchangers; ethylene and LNG plant equipment; ethylene plant operations; reliability and process safety; microreactor engineering; and distillation. **Project management** — a lead-in for the AIChE Management Conference (Managing CPI Energy and Raw Materials Uncertainties in a Global Context; Apr. 26–27; co-located in Houston), featured sessions include new approaches to project management, and portfolio and alliance management.

• **April 26, Thursday — Sustainable development** — highlighted sessions include: the business case for sustainability; management systems; social responsibility; green engineering; and industrial water sustainability.

Carrying on a lengthy tradition, the Spring Meeting continues to be organized around several key topical conferences, including those encompassing ethylene, process safety, microreactor engineering, natural gas, distillation, novel technologies, etc. Perhaps starting a new tradition, the Young Professionals Advisory Board (YPAB) has done extensive programming to help engineers at the start of their career become more familiar with industrial practice. On Apr. 21–22, YPAB has organized a suite of seven 2-hour tutorials (at a nominal fee). Subjects covered include engineering ethics, economic analysis, distillation and more.

To get a real-world feel for chemical engineering, half-day plant tours are available. They include visits to the KBR Technical Center, the Lyondell ethylene plant and the Johnson NASA Space Center. And after a long day of networking and learning, kick back and relax at the evening social events, including wine sampling, comical engineering and a boat tour of the Houston Ship Channel with a barbecue dinner. For more details on the plant tours, evening events, as well as the Spring Meeting's tutorials and sessions covering the latest results and trends in the application of chemical engineering tools, visit www.aiche.org/spring.

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