GEOGRAPHICAL AND SUSTAINABILITY SCIENCES NEWSLETTER
September 17, 2014

CALENDAR

September 19  Faculty meeting will be held from 11:30 – 1:00 in B5 JH

September 19  Kohn Colloquium at 3:30 pm in 221 JH

  Speaker: James Schwab, AICP, Manager, APA Hazards Planning Research Center, American Planning Association

  Refreshments will be provided by the Geography department at 3:00 pm in the foyer.

ABSTRACT

The American Planning Association, with more than 35,000 members, lies at a crucial intersection between theory and practice, helping its members use both academic and applied research to improve planning practice in U.S. communities and abroad. Seeking to refine its focus on subjects of growing importance in coming decades, in 2008 APA established its National Centers for Planning with three centers focusing on hazards, green communities, and the intersection between planning and community health. This presentation will focus on the challenges of translating academic theory regarding hazards and community planning into improved local and regional planning practice through applied research and practical training projects, using examples of recent APA projects to achieve those goals.

Fundamentally, APA sees the role of the planner in addressing hazard-related issues as falling into two categories: hazard mitigation and disaster recovery. Most other practical needs are the principal domain of emergency managers or others, such as public works and utilities professionals. Even with this, it is important to grasp that planners work at another crucial intersection, that between allied professions whose knowledge contributes to better disaster planning in ways that planners are well trained to synthesize and coordinate. Thus, planners need interpersonal and leadership skills to bring these skills and areas of expertise to bear in a coordinated fashion upon public policy problems associated with reducing risk and creating resilience. As may well be imagined, this is seldom if ever a simple task and inevitably entails collisions, to one degree or another, with political and social realities. In this effort, there is no final victory, but there is progress.

Reminder: Please email any recently received awards, notable presentations or exciting news to angela-bellew@uiowa.edu by Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. to be included in the weekly newsletter.