



GEM Systems Advanced Magnetometers
52 West Beaver Creek Road West, Suite 14
Richmond Hill, ON Canada L4B 1L9
Ph. 905-764-8008 Fax. 905-764-2949
info@gemsys.ca www.gemsys.ca

Conference Report: International Conference on Environmental and Engineering Geophysics, Wuhan, China. July 6 to 8, 2004.

After 24 or more hours in transit, you finally step off the plane and realize that you are in China ... interior China, and specifically Wuhan – one of the 3 hottest cities in China, located in the mid-East portion of this huge and impressive country. For the next 4 days, you will be immersed in earth science technology and strategies for effective deployment of technologies for various earth science problems.

The event is the International Conference on Environmental and Engineering Geophysics (ICEEG) – a topic close to your own heart and to those of many Chinese as judged by the attendance of nearly 150 international and Chinese delegates ... a respectable showing for the first ever conference of this type in China.



GEM Marketing Manager, Greg Hollyer, greeting Chinese visitors at GEM's display booth at the ICEEG.

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The ICEEG meeting was, for many, the first ever to a Chinese-hosted scientific event and it was as eye-opening for its hospitality almost as much as the technologies that were on display in presentations and in the exhibition hall. The Chinese were very gracious hosts; whisking their foreign guests off on their arrival at the conference hotel by bus for an afternoon of novel food, and visits to museums and temples.

The museum was a particular high-point as we arrived just in time to see a musical presentation conducted by seven players on the world's heaviest instrument – a 2,000 year-old set of bells uncovered in the last fifteen years from the Marquis Qin's tomb. The playing was outstanding; covering a full range of eastern and western-inspired songs crafted by an ever-changing set of musicians who migrated from station to station along the instrument's length.

And not to be outdone, the conference organizers put on a show of hospitality and technology that would leave many western organizers impressed by its planning and almost flawless execution. There were many opportunities to meet other scientific professionals, for instance, at evening banquets or casually during the course of the conference. Language was sometimes an issue but generally there was always a Chinese delegate who knew enough English to help out in the course of a conversation.

The opening banquet featured introductions to a slew of key people, including the President of the China University of Geosciences – the venue for the event and the largest geological school in China with more than 25,000 students on two campuses in Wuhan and Beijing.

The Past-President of the Environmental and Engineering Geophysics Society, Dr. William Doll, graciously accepted the warm wishes of the Chinese organizers and stressed the importance of these types of events for cross-pollination and development of ideas.

Speaking with delegates during and after the conference, they were, for the most part, enthusiastic about the scientific talks which were conducted entirely in English – yet an extra challenge for our enterprising Chinese hosts. The program was very diverse featuring 38 papers in Seismic Methods, 8 papers in GPR applications, 28 papers in



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Electrical and Electromagnetic Methods, 20 papers in Gravity / Magnetism and Integrated Geophysics, and 13 papers in Relevant Environmental and Engineering topics.

It was a busy few days but well worthwhile for both the hospitality and technical discussions held on site. Afterwards, some of the group stayed on for a tour of the Yangtze River Dam, the world's largest and an amazing engineering feat.

For those of you who might be interested in reviewing the conference technologies, you may want to look for Proceedings of the International Conference on Environmental and Engineering Geophysics, 6 – 9 June 2004, Wuhan, China. It's well worth a look and gives good insight into the current state of the earth science disciplines in one of the world's most populous, environmentally challenged, and growth-oriented countries.