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AMERICAN NATIONAL STANDARDS INSTITUTE AND METRIC CONVERSION

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Authors

Davey, J.

Reimers, R.

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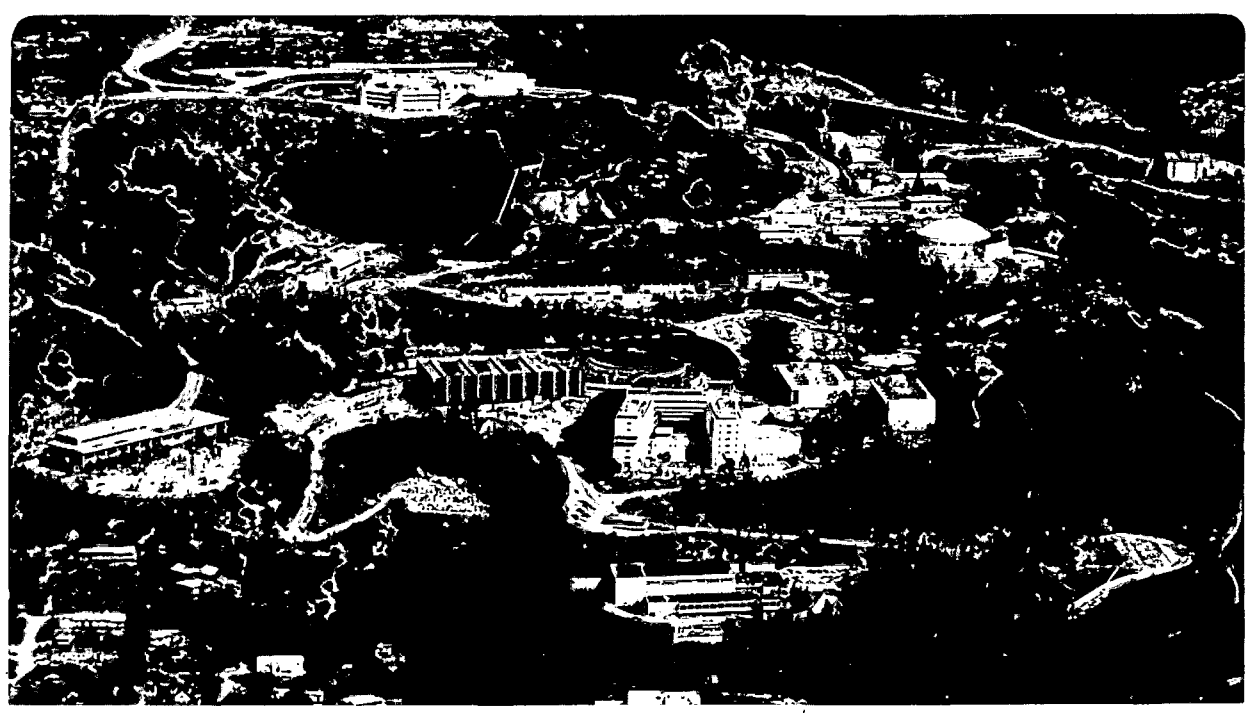
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ENGINEERING NOTE		AA0139	M5770	1 of 3
AUTHOR	DEPARTMENT	LOCATION	DATE	
J. Davey/R. Reimers	Mechanical	Berkeley	August 19, 1981	
PROGRAM - PROJECT - JOB				
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING				
DEPARTMENTAL METRICATION				
TITLE				
AMERICAN NATIONAL STANDARDS INSTITUTE AND METRIC CONVERSION				
<p>In a continuing effort to reveal some order in the national conversion to metric, the following update on the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) activities is reported. ANSI has also supplied LBL with their current status report of projects under the jurisdiction of the members of the Mechanical Standards Management Board. (Available - LBL Metrication Committee Files.)</p> <p>The American National Standards Institute, which is commonly known by its acronym 'ANSI', gives its purposes and functions which relate to, and are supportive of, the U. S. Metric Conversion Act. National Standards are developed in cooperation and interaction with many international groups, some governmental and some nongovernmental. ANSI's principal interface internationally is with the world's most prominent nontreaty organizations, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). ANSI is the U. S. member of ISO and IEC and provides the full U. S. share of financial support.</p> <p><u>ANSI's Purposes and its Relationship to Government</u></p> <p>ANSI is a voluntary, nonprofit organization founded in 1918 by five professional societies and three agencies of the government (Departments of Commerce, War, and Navy) to provide a mechanism for coordinating the development of engineering and related standards. From the beginning ANSI has grown into a federation of some 200 professional, trade, technical, labor, consumer, and governmental organizations and approximately 800 individual firms representing virtually every facet of commerce, trade, and industry. Membership in ANSI is important, but it is not required for participation on standards writing committees operating under ANSI procedures.</p> <p>The purposes of ANSI, as provided in its charter are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a voluntary procedural mechanism for management and coordination of American National Standards. 2. Provide criteria for approval of proposed standards as American National (consensus) Standards. 3. Provide a clearinghouse for national and international standards and standards information. 4. Provide for representation of U. S. voluntary standards interests in international nontreaty standards organizations. The two principal groups are the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), both nongovernment organizations. 				

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5. Provide a focal point for government-nongovernment interface where this is desired by government and the voluntary standards system.

ANSI does not obtain nor does it desire any special treatment or favored position with any department or agency of government. All actions of and by ANSI are voluntary. Membership, participation, and submission of standards are voluntary. Use by government at any level and for any purpose of promulgated American National Standard is a separate and independent judgment or action on the part of duly elected or constituted officials. ANSI and its federated members encourage participation by government personnel at technical, administrative, and policy levels of the institute. Government(s) at all levels are encouraged to utilize American National Standards to the extent that they are available and applicable to public programs and needs.

ANSI's Role in Metric Conversion

ANSI plays no particularly unique role in metric conversion. It will continue as it has for more than sixty years to provide the organizational structure and operating procedures necessary for voluntary (consensus) development of standards required to meet the needs of society. There is no question that there must be a substantial increase in the number and rate of development of standards expressed in SI units of measure. It is impossible in a voluntary organization to "force" a particular type of standards content--e.g., metric sizing or units. The need must be recognized; the standard must be practical and usable; the timing must coincide with societal need. This does not imply that ANSI intends to be passive. It will continue to encourage voluntary development and use of metric standards.

ANSI has played an active role in metric activities of the past decade. Some 12 years ago, before the Congress passed legislation authorizing a study of the metric system, ANSI had in place a highly qualified and experienced Metric Advisory Committee. The work of this advisory group along with the growing concern of those segments of society which thought that metric conversion in the United States should be voluntary--and that planning and coordination for conversion should be centered largely in the private sector--led to development of the ANSI American National Metric Council (ANMC) in 1972. Within a few years, ANMC became an independent voluntary organization.

Note - LBL subscribes to ANMC Bi-monthly Publication, "Metric Reporter" (available-Metrication Committee files).

Reference: "ANSI & Metric Conversion", Frank J. Feely, Jr., President-American National Standards Institute, 1979.

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