

Region 8 News

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Goals

IEEE Region 8 News is the member newsletter for those in Region 8, reporting on member activities around the Region, such as meetings, conferences and events, plus important milestones and key initiatives by Committees and Affinity Groups. The newsletter is produced by volunteers from contributions by members. It is distributed to IEEE members in Region 8 with IEEE Spectrum and The Institute. PDFs of current and back-issues are available on the Region 8 website. We aim to rebuild recognition and status among members by continuing the re-established quarterly publishing cycle of the print-and-PDF edition. It remains our intention to launch an app-based edition that is more readily discoverable and easier to read on small screens. A soft launch before the end of 2018 should be followed in the first quarter of next year by a more widely promoted launch.

Status

Since January 2018, the newsletter has been edited by Alistair Dabbs and Bojan Nikolic. With the forthcoming December 2018 newsletter, we will have met our initial goal to complete the year having adhered to our advertised quarterly publication dates and with every issue appearing on time. Our pre-page editorial workflow is now conducted entirely within Google Apps and shared Google Drive folders associated with the team's IEEE accounts. Page production uses the Adobe Creative Cloud suite but with the content shared on Google Drive again for reasons of flexibility, backup and disaster recovery. Our plan to trial a digital edition app for IEEE Region 8 News over the summer was postponed to avoid clashing with the launch of IEEE Region 8 Today, an independent Region 8 initiative to create a web-based newsfeed for members. Now that this newsfeed is up and running with its own editorial team in charge, our newsletter app project has been revived and is currently being re-costed to ensure it can be achieved within the existing budget. Data from Piscataway indicates that roughly half of the Region 8 membership receives the print edition of IEEE Region 8 News by post each quarter. Additionally, bulk copies are delivered regularly to specific Section excoms, Affinity Group chairs and other Region 8 representatives who have made a request. Members who don't receive a printed copy include those whose discounted membership entitles them to digital downloads only, and those who have explicitly switched to a digital-only Spectrum subscription. The PDF editions continue to be published online free of charge and without any membership restriction at the Region 8 website, each issue being made available 1-2 weeks in advance of the print edition mailing.

Outlook

The print edition of IEEE Region 8 News is likely to continue being published and mailed out for the foreseeable future. While it is logical to push news media with frequent or real-time publishing cycles onto digital-only platforms, a newsletter that is published just four times a year achieves enhanced visibility, status and longevity by appearing in print. Physical copies have proven to be a useful marketing tool for IEEE membership development at events where Region 8 units participate. To strengthen its role as a publication of record, however, the newsletter needs to be more readily accessible, legible and searchable from everyday mobile devices. As part of our smartphone app project, we are developing ways for members to search for keywords across current and back issues. To this end, we have been trying to locate back-issues prior to 2002 (which exist only in printed form) for scanning and OCR processing to add to the database. Please contact the editors at r8news@ieee.org if you have any of these old issues you are prepared to lend us.

Points of Concern

A few Sections, Chapters and Affinity Groups remain coy about letting us know about their successful activities and forthcoming plans. We understand the time pressure on volunteers and how tiresome it can be to be asked to write articles and send us photos, especially when there are already official event reports, admin and other IEEE-related chores to deal with first. Please accept our apologies if our attempts at reaching out to you in advance of each issue deadline are unwelcome. However, having a relevant article about your Section, Chapter or Affinity Group appear in IEEE Region 8 News is worth the effort. It will enhance your standing within the Region and IEEE at large, boost awareness and contribute to membership development. If you want help with preparing articles, get in touch with the editor at r8news@ieee.org. We also believe that official Region-level subcommittees should treat it as an obligation to keep the wider membership updated about their projects and achievements via Region 8's official quarterly newsletter in addition to other platforms. Not everyone is on Facebook.

Other Issues to report