

Robert W. Noth

Chairman of the Board

American National Standards Institute

Remarks from the Chairman

2008 ANSI Annual Business Meeting

October 23, 2008 – Bethesda

1,438 words, approximately 11.5 minutes

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Bob Noth and I am chairman of the American National Standards Institute Board of Directors.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Institute's 90th Anniversary Celebratory Luncheon and to call this 2008 Annual Business Meeting to order.

(pause)

ANSI has grown and changed over the past ninety years.

When we started, we were standardizing pipe threads and railroad tracks . . . working to strengthen our nation's infrastructure.

As time and technology have marched on, we have applied our cardinal principles to electronics, software, management sciences, and issues of safety and the environment – both in the workplace and in our personal lives.

Today, we're looking at the global supply chain, alternative energies, and services, to name just a few . . . transitioning from hardware to a more ephemeral world.

(pause)

I believe that those who don't study history are bound to repeat it so it is good for us to occasionally look back and learn more about the activities and accomplishments that have shaped the organization into what it is today.

It is equally important that we honor those who have helped to position ANSI at the forefront of the global standardization community.

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge one of those individuals now.

Mr. Manny Peralta, a former president and chief executive officer of ANSI.

Manny, would you please stand?

Manny served as president of ANSI from 1989 to 1993. He had just taken over the helm when I become involved with the Institute. During this time, he helped to bring ANSI onto the radar

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screen of business . . . while dealing with the complexities tied to the formation of the new European Union.

Manny was not a newcomer to the ANSI family. He had already spent several years on the Institute's Board of Directors as a representative of Exxon.

When he retired from ANSI, he and his lovely wife Gloria established the Peralta Charitable Remainder Unitrust, which is to be used by the Institute for educational purposes.

Manny and Gloria, we are grateful to you for your generosity and your vision. You have helped to ensure the long-term integrity of both ANSI and future generations of the U.S. standards and conformity assessment community.

(lead applause)

In the back of the room is a display of letters from ANSI's founding organizations, and I'd like to encourage all of you to take a few moments to look them over. A common theme among them is the assessment that – over the years – ANSI has stayed true to their vision . . . even as the role of voluntary standards and conformity assessment has grown to an increasingly prominent position in the global economy.

The ANSI in their "mind's eye" would continue to evolve as markets matured and new markets emerged.

(pause)

As your chairman, I have tried to always remain focused on ANSI's future.

Working with the Institute's staff, volunteer leaders, and members, we have been keeping our eyes on the horizon . . . straining to see what's new, what's next, and how it will affect the way we all do business.

We strive to not only keep pace with evolving technologies – but to position ourselves at the forefront of emerging issues and national, regional and global priorities.

(pause)

Our work in the area of consumer product safety is a very recent example.

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Standards and conformity assessment programs are needed to help keep us safe.

ANSI is working with our members and partners to restore consumer confidence and ensure the food we eat, the toys we give to our children, and the products we use meet the highest possible levels of safety.

Working with government officials from agencies like the CPSC, the USDA and the FDA, our member standards developing organizations, and industry leaders, we are ensuring that applicable regulations and voluntary standards meet consumer expectations and that those standards are known and respected by producers no matter where they are located. Concurrently, and perhaps more importantly, making sure that we have a system that confirms products, services, and personnel actually conform to the relevant standards.

Standards and conformance programs are the fuel of the nation's economic engine . . . not speed bumps on the highway of progress. ANSI is playing a key role in establishing the appropriate balance between the public and private sector in meeting the challenge.

Our efforts will continue to promote and support the U.S. trade agenda – and help to avoid unnecessary regulatory burdens that might hinder U.S. competitiveness in global markets.

(pause)

The interoperability of information and communication technologies and products is fundamental to business operation and even our individual well being. We are quickly discovering that we cannot function effectively in today's world without it.

Whether it's being able to access your money from an ATM using a credit or debit card or using your cell phone around the world or ensuring that our personal health data is electronically available to those who need to see it but secure from those who don't, we all want the products and systems we use to work together in a seamless manner.

The reality is that many industries have an installed base of products, services and systems that need to be revised to meet evolving standards. From that perspective, the subjects and technologies have changed but the challenge is the same as it was 90 years ago with standardizing fire hydrant threads and railroad gages. This illustrates my point about studying history - the more things change, the more they stay the same – and points out why it is increasingly more important to get the right standards established before the installed base becomes a significant obstacle.

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I'll let Joe Bhatia tell you more about ANSI's efforts to support cross-cutting harmonization issues like identity theft protection and healthcare information technology when he reports on this year's accomplishments.

As you will hear, we've done a good job examining — and anticipating — many of the issues that are of critical importance to this nation. We'll also be keeping our eyes focused on the future so that we can more quickly identify, define and evaluate new priority areas, new constituencies and new opportunities for ANSI and its members.

(pause)

There is a lot of activity competing for our attention: the economy, clearly. And there's an election just days away – which will be followed by the shuffle and transition period that comes with a new administration. Over the next few months, ANSI will be cultivating relationships with the new leadership to advance our mutual goals and objectives.

As members, we all need to make a commitment to help executives in both industry and government better understand the role of standardization in the domestic, regional and global economy.

Ours is not a quick and easy story to tell . . . but it is definitely a compelling story and one that is worth being told . . . and repeated frequently.

(pause – begin conclusion)

With the close of this, my last annual business meeting as ANSI chairman, I will also be bringing to a close a special chapter of my 17-year engagement with ANSI. So I want to say that it has been an honor and a privilege to serve the Institute and work with you in furthering the cause of standardization.

It is only through your expertise and efforts that we – ANSI – are able to focus on the critical needs facing consumers, governments and the business community. I thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Experience has taught me that standardization should be looked at as a journey . . . and that any given version of a standard is only a temporary stopping place on the trip and a platform for the next step forward. It is the same with leadership.

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Some of us are privileged to serve for a time, do the best we can do on our watch and build on the foundation stones others have laid before us. It is also incumbent upon us that we do the best we can to ensure the next generation of leadership is prepared for the challenges ahead. On that note, I can say without equivocation that I leave ANSI in good hands.

I will look forward to continuing my service to the Institute, its members and governance team while wearing a new hat – and a different ribbon on my badge.

Now, it is my great pleasure to introduce ANSI's president and CEO, Joe Bhatia. I look forward to hearing his perspective on the activities and accomplishments we've seen over the past year.

Joe