

## Q & A WITH NEW BOARD MEMBER VALI SORELL, PRESIDENT OF SORELL ENGINEERING



**Q: When did you begin your term on the board?**

A: I started in January of this year. I've been attending the Carolinas chapter 7 X 24 Exchange meetings for quite a few years. I was so pleasantly surprised to see the level of participation in this chapter. I've given talks at many other 7 X 24 Exchange chapters, and I have to say the Carolinas chapter is probably one of the best attended. The quality and depth and breadth of the subjects that are addressed outshine other chapters that I've been exposed to. I was really happy to have moved to an area with a 7 X 24 chapter that is so active. And I was really happy to be asked to be on the board.

**Q: Are you on any of the committees?**

A: I'm on the technical leadership committee. At

Syska Hennessy I was responsible for concepts and innovations. It was my job to evaluate new technologies and to provide some mentoring for the other offices and other engineers so that they would know how to apply the most recent best practices.

**Q: What do you hope to accomplish on the board?**

A: I've really been looking at industry-wide best practices. I've been a member of ASHRAE for a long time and have been participating in their technical committee 9.9, which is heavily involved with development of industry best practices for the mission critical industry. That committee has pushed the envelope for what is considered best practice. Unlike many other branches of HVAC engineering, which tend to be static, the data

center marketplace has just exploded. The data center of today can't be designed the way we designed them in 1995 or even 2005. It's such a dynamic marketplace that you have to be fully engaged in several professional organizations to understand where the best practices are going. I pride myself on the fact that I've stayed with it, watched it develop, been a participant, contributed, and published articles. So I feel very much a part of that, and I feel that I can help keep end users who are members of this chapter apprised about developing best practices and give them a vision for where the industry is going. I am passionate about eliminating waste, whether it be energy consumption, water consumption, or even capital costs. When you follow a holistic approach to eliminate wasteful spending, you'll save over the life of a project. I hope to be able to impart that on the local industry. I want to see more large-scale data centers come to the Carolinas. I think there is opportunity for our committee to work with Duke Energy and local end users, engineers, and contractors to make this a great climate for development of data centers in this region.



**Q: How does your membership in 7X24 impact you?**

A: Having established myself in the industry and now being on my own, I hope my membership in 7 X 24 improves my visibility within the local marketplace and enables me to have more one-on-one interactions with the other members. I hope to educate the local members on best practices, new technologies, and other technical leadership issues. At the same time, these local members become my sounding board. If I'm trying to develop something different or innovative, I don't have to wait for the next national meeting with 800 or 1,000 people to express an idea. I can call someone who works at Disney or Facebook and say, "I've got this idea ... ." It's a very good opportunity to have give and take. I hope to educate them, and I hope they can educate me and help me implement some engineering strategies to make these ideas a reality. I live and work in the data centers that I design, so I need their input to make sure I'm not going in the wrong direction. They become my reality check. To have that kind of interaction between myself, as a designer, and the end users who are 7 X 24 Exchange members locally provides invaluable dialog to put me in a better position to serve them and have them educate me.

*Vali Sorell left his position as chief HVAC engineer for the critical facilities group at Syska Hennessy to found his own engineering consulting firm, Sorell Engineering.*