Under secretary of defense keynotes Computer Software and Applications Conference

Richard D. DeLauer, under secretary of defense for research and engineering, keynoted the seventh annual International Computer Software and Applications Conference, held November 9-11 in Chicago's Palmer House Hotel. Some 800 computer professionals from throughout the world heard DeLauer discuss "DoD's Software Initiatives: What has Happened and Where are we Headed."

He stated that, as software systems expanded, the funding and expertise to support them have lagged seriously. "Symptoms of the lag are evident in weapons systems slips due to software problems, failures caused by software bugs, cost overruns, and the shortage of computer professionals. The nation needs 12 percent more software people each year," he said. "The US output of software personnel is increasing by only four percent and the country is left with an annual shortfall of some 100,000. And by 1990, the lack will be in excess of one million."

In 1975, DeLauer reported, the DoD initiated the Ada program to deal with software problems. Recently it adopted a software initiative, the STARS program, to improve software management practices, acquisition strategies, process automation, and implementation mechanisms, as well as to increase software training. And a new in-house DoD team is developing requirements for future software engineering environments, while another group is planning a Software Engineering Institute, which will have research and education functions and focus its work on implementing promising concepts and technologies. It will aim at shortening the delays from development to manufacturing—not large-scale production, but small-scale implementation that makes new technologies available to the user.

By the end of 1984, the SEI should be setting DoD software standards for the armed services and defense agencies. It will also provide the interface among the government, industries, and universities.

In the question-and-answer session that followed his talk, DeLauer explained that the problem of recruiting government and university software engineers is now being addressed by the DoD-University Forum, which is aiming to establish an ROTC program for software engineers, as well as a university teaching internship as a substitute for military service.

Three IEEE-CS conferences moved to Sheraton Palace Hotel

Compcon Spring '84, February 27-March 1; IEEE Infocom '84, April 9-12; and the Fourth International Conference on Distributed Computing Systems, May 14-17, will be moved from the previously announced Cathedral Hill Hotel to the Sheraton Palace Hotel, 639 Market Street, San Francisco, Calif.

The Cathedral Hill Hotel was severely damaged by a fire on December 18, 1983. Compcon Spring '84 General Chairman John Wakerly is asking all Compcon attendees who have already registered at the Cathedral Hill to register as soon as possible at the Sheraton Palace. The phone number is (415) 392-8600.

Erratum

In announcing the 1984 Computer Society awards program, Computer mistakenly credited IBM with participation in screening candidates for the Emmanuel R. Piore Award. The Computer Society alone nominates candidates whose achievement in the field of information processing qualifies them for this IEEE field award.