

Notes from the Editor's Desk



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People like Stan Lindsey, Jim Fisher and Jim O. Malley have always impressed me. And it's not just because of their formidable technical skills or intriguing personalities—though all three are impressive in both areas. Rather, it's their ability and willingness to devote a huge chunk of time volunteering to work on professional committees.

What I find perhaps even more impressive is the willingness of so many firms to allow their valued staff to leave the office to attend long meetings. Obviously, these are farsighted firms which realize that a stronger industry will benefit their business in the long-run.

With work just completed on the latest AISC LRFD Specification, it seems more than appropriate to honor the 43 professionals on the AISC Specifications Committee who devoted countless hours to this work (note that this doesn't even begin to discuss the many more individuals who served on various task committees).

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As Nestor Iwankiw, AISC's Vice President of Engineering, explains: "The AISC Committee on Specifications is almost equivalent, in an engineering sense, to the US Supreme Court in establishing authoritative requirements for structural steel design, which are then adopted by the legally binding building codes. This critical responsibility entails continually combining past experience with new knowledge and with a practical applications sense to provide for adequate structural safety. Throughout AISC's past decades of history and now, the successful and high-level US design practice indicates that we, and the entire profession and construction community, have been very fortunate to have this prestigious Committee body perform this difficult function in most admirable fashion. While the particular individuals, total number of committee members, its organization and procedures have obviously changed over the many years since its inception in the 1920's, the overriding committee spirit of integrating top technical expertise, receiving a balance of views from different sectors, and following due process in resolving differences of opinion have always been present.

"Currently, the evolution of AISC Specification Committee work and needs has led to a pending ANSI accreditation as a standards committee. This ANSI accreditation will formally reaffirm the committee's objectives and operating procedures. More than 40 regular committee members, supplemented by another additional 40 Task Committee members, comprise the large network of engineering talent that is brought to bear as changes or new editions of AISC Specifications are prepared. Known experts from academia/research, consulting engineering, and industry deliberate in a consensus manner, and on a voluntary basis, to develop the best possible criteria for steel design and fabrication.

"All of these individual committee members are very busy in their principal career endeavors, yet they are fully dedicated to AISC Specification duties as volunteers, without any compensation for their committee work time. Obviously, their technical input and review, at both the TC and main committee levels, of all the proposed changes is critical to maintaining the AISC Specification not only as the US standard, but also as one of the world's leading steel design standards."