

Correspondence

Dear Editor:

The NSBA Prize Bridge Award for deck replacement on New York Route 367 in the Village of Wellsburg, NY, highlights an unfortunate example of how innovation at any cost is practiced by some state highway departments, as well as the federal government. In this case, a composite deck with an estimated service life of thirty years (for the entire bridge) replaced a concrete/asphalt deck at a total cost of \$876,000 or \$226.00 per sq ft. Our installed price for a galvanized, corrugated steel deck would have been \$47,600 or \$13.50 per sq. ft plus the cost of the removal of the existing deck.

In fact, while the NYDOT states a total bridge replacement would have cost \$2.3 million, we would have sold them a fully galvanized truss bridge, delivered and ready for erection at a price of \$280,000. Further, while they claim the service life of their bridge has been extended for 30 years, our bridge would have come with a 35 year written warranty against corrosion and no doubt would have gone on a century before the exposure of 5% of the underlying steel.

We have sold over 50 truss bridges to counties in New York since 1987, a "drop in the bucket" compared to their desperate need for bridge replacements on rural highways. One county alone has over 400 seriously deficient bridges and a budget that permits for only four replacement bridges each year. The \$876,000 spent by the NYDOT on their innovative composite bridge deck could have purchased three new bridges, deck and all.

Go to any town in upstate New York and see whether the economy is growing, stagnant or shrinking. Industry and population are fleeing New York in large measure because of its high taxes. NYDOT can ill afford to innovate at any cost. We have been in the business of building economical bridges for rural highways for over 50 years, we are represented in 20 states and business has never been better. We have found that county engineers practice the art of engineering, that is the finding of practical solutions to problems. NYDOT and the jury that made this award are practicing the art of government overspending. I think that most of your readers know the difference.

Richard D. Rogovin
US Bridge
Cambridge, OH

Dear Editor:

The August 2000 issue of Modern Steel Construction contained an interesting article titled, "Designing a Landmark for the United Arab Emirates." According to following references, which I had

access immediately online, the structure is located in the Persian Gulf, not Arabian Gulf as the article stated.

To guarantee accuracy of information transferred to your readers, please include a note correcting this term in the next issue.

Fariborz Tehrani, P.E.

Dear Editor:

I really wish you would change your policy of not having any captions accompanying the pictures in your articles.

In the August issue, there are several articles on various projects around the world and I could not make heads or tails out of the pictures. Why can't you do like everyone else with technical articles and describe what a picture is showing?

Richard R. Bradshaw S.E.
Los Angeles, CA

Dear Editor:

Thanks for the heads-up in your column this month regarding, "Building Big" and its website. PBS has done a great job in recent years of educating the public about engineering. For example, the NOVA episodes on two topics of special interest here in St. Louis, the flood of 1993 and the new cable-stayed Clark Bridge near Alton, IL. I know that those of us with young friends and relatives whom we want to encourage to learn their math and expand their career options will be passing on the "Building Big" web address.

Yes, the architect is usually the hero, such as Robert Reed of "The Brady Bunch" and Tom Hanks in "Sleepless in Seattle", but I once met someone who became interested in engineering because of "Family Affair" and "Uncle Bill" in which Brian Keith played an engineer. From the size of his office in the series, he must have been one of the firm's principals!

Thanks again for your always-informative publication.

Antoinette Serena, P.E.

Dear Editor:

I would like to thank Mr. Grubb for having good coverage of welding in your Quiz. In my 14 years of experience working with structural engineers, I find that many don't have even a fundamental knowledge welding.

However, in the July 2000 issue of Modern Steel Construction, I would like

to take issue with the answer to question number 3. The difference between filler metal and weld metal is not "somewhat esoteric." The composition and properties of filler metal and weld metal can be quite different, depending on a lot of factors. These include dilution with the base metal, type of flux and/or shielding gas, the electrical parameters, travel speed, preheat, etc. That is why welding procedure qualification testing is vital, to make sure that the designer is getting what they specified in regards to strength, toughness and other properties in the joint.

Keep up the good work!

Greg Pike
High Steel Structures, Inc.
Lancaster, PA

Dear Editor:

I certainly enjoyed your column concerning Bob Lorenz. Tell him "hello" for me. I think Bob did much to promote AISC and their services. He will be hard to replace.

William F. Gerdes III
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