



Scott L. Melnick

Besides providing a fun visit to Nashville (honkytonks live!), this year's Structures Congress also provided an excellent snapshot of the major issues affecting the design and construction community.

The conference was dominated by discussions on the quality of construction documents (a rough calculation is that around 10% percent of the papers presented touched on this issue). The Council of American Structural Engineers has taken a great step forward in this area with the issuance of CASE 962-D, *A Guideline Addressing Coordination and Completeness of Structural Construction Documents*. While this document is intended, as its title suggests, as a guideline, I believe that it will quickly become an industry-wide standard of care. As such, it behooves every designer to examine the guideline and begin adopting its language and suggestions. If you don't already have a copy, visit <http://store.acec.org> and order a copy (it sells for \$30 plus shipping).

If you think sustainable design is just a passing fancy or is just an HVAC issue, think again. Yes, it includes energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions, but it also focuses needed attention on recycling and recyclability of materials, and site and environmental impact. While architects are the most vocal proponents (it was a big topic at the recent AIA convention), it's starting to creep into the consciousness of major owners. For example, I heard that Chicago's Mayor Daley recently decreed that all new city construction must meet LEED™ standards. And for the last four years, Seattle has kept to its policy goal of silver-level LEED performance for new city-funded projects with more than 5,000 sq. ft. of occupied space.

If you're not familiar with the U.S. Green Building Council and its Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) Green Building Rating System, please check out the USGBC home page at www.usgbc.org or visit www.aisc.org/sustainability and download AISC's free LEED report. Another neat document is the *Field Guide for Sustainable Construction*, which was produced for the Pentagon by Michael H. Pulaski at the Partnership for Achieving Construction Excellence at Penn State. You can download a free copy of this massive resource by visiting <http://renovation.pentagon.mil/sustainfieldguide.htm>.

Any discussion of fire or blast resistant design will draw a crowd. Unfortunately, too many presentations deliver too little information. For example, at the Structures Congress, one presentation on steel's response in fire actually presented information based on a preliminary report that had previously been repudiated—and the

author acknowledged it during the presentation (and don't get me started on the hogwash regularly being printed in the consumer press, including the usually reliable New York Times). Another explained that concrete—and especially high-strength concrete—is subject to explosive spalling in fires, but neglected to discuss well-known, albeit expensive, design solutions. The blast-resistance presentations, with a few notable exceptions—such as Charlie Carter's overview of Blast and Progressive Collapse Resistance in Steel Structures—suffered from a lack of information. Too often the presenters were handicapped by not being able to discuss specific blast loadings, thereby rendering their information all but useless.

AISC has attempted to fill in some of this gap by providing factual and useful information. A free overview of fire issues is available by downloading *Facts for Steel Buildings: Fire* at www.aisc.org/fire. Also available for \$60 (AISC members can download the document for free or purchase a printed copy for \$30) is *Design Guide 19: Fire Resistance of Structural Steel Framing*. And for a detailed look at the subject, I recommend you attend AISC's new lecture series "Fire, Blast and Progressive Collapse" (see page 19 for more information).

AISC also has a number of technical papers available on blast and progressive collapse (mostly from last December's Symposium on Blast and Progressive Collapse), including: *Learning from Structures Subjected to Loads Extremely Beyond Design; Progressive Collapse Basics; Performance-Based Engineering of Buildings for Extreme Events; Assessing and Minimizing Threats to Buildings; Blast Basics; Conventionally Designed Buildings; Blast and Progressive Collapse Resistance; Considerations for Retrofit of Existing Steel Buildings for Resisting Blast and Progressive Collapse; Design of Steel Structures for Blast-Related Progressive Collapse Resistance*.

All of these papers are available from www.aisc.org for \$10 each (no charge for AISC members!).

EDI is the future of construction. The big industrial companies are huge proponents of electronic data interchange (EDI) and we've seen a number of success stories in the commercial market. The cost and time savings are huge—it's only a question of whether engineers are willing to embrace the technology (and if they can develop a model that allows them to capture increased fees based on the overall project savings developed through the use of EDI). And best of all, the software is already available. For a list of vendors offering compatible software, visit www.aisc.org/cis2.

Editorial Offices

Modern Steel Construction
One E. Wacker Dr., Suite 3100
Chicago, IL 60601
312.670.2400 tel
312.670.5403 fax

Editorial Contacts

Editor & Publisher
Scott L. Melnick
312.670.8314
melnick@modernsteel.com

Managing Editor
Keith A. Grubb, P.E., S.E.
312.670.8318
grubb@modernsteel.com

Associate Editor
Beth S. Pollak
312.670.8316
pollak@modernsteel.com

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Advertising Contact

Account Manager
John A. Byrne
847.699.6049 tel
847.699.8681 fax
byrne@modernsteel.com
2400 E. Devon Ave., Suite 380
Des Plaines, IL 60018

To receive advertising information, contact John Byrne or view it online: www.modernsteel.com

Address Changes and Subscription Questions

312.670.5444 tel
312.670.5403 fax
admin@modernsteel.com