



Scott L. Melnick

The other day my entire family was in the minivan heading to Lowes to look at some plants for an extension of our garden. My wife and I were talking up front, *Nick Jr.* music was blaring in the back. Judy asked if I was taking my bike to the train tomorrow, and I answered no since I had a late meeting scheduled. Just then my son Joshua chimed up: "Dad can't ride tomorrow because it's going to be cold and rainy." Two thoughts immediately went through my head. One, how does a four-year-old know the weather report (and yes, he was right)? And two, always watch what you're saying—someone is always listening (Joshua told us later that he had overheard his pre-school teacher talking about tomorrow's weather).

It's amazing the myriad ways that information is exchanged. Last week I witnessed one of the most successful and traditional exchanges of information: The North American Steel Construction Conference. More than 2,300 attendees heard from more than 100 presenters on more than 50 subjects. They also had the opportunity to view the newest and latest products—whether they were interested in structural engineering software or the most advanced equipment for their fabrication shop. And even more importantly, designers, detailers, erectors, fabricators, and academics had a chance to come together and exchange ideas and to network. It was truly a wonderful event and I urge everyone to attend the 2006 Conference in San Antonio on February 8-11. (Incidentally, if you were in Montreal at the 2005 Conference, I would love to hear your comments on the Conference.)

Another example of traditional information is this magazine. Some people believe that so-called "New Media" will replace the printed page, but I'm more of the school that believes that just as radio and then television complemented magazines and newspapers, so too will on-line communications. That said, I have to admit that I love the inherent power represented by list serves (and their trendy cousin, the blog). Recently, Darin Gillies, vice president of AISC-member Reliance Steel, Inc., in Colchester, VT, posted a plea for help on the steel-detail@yahoogroups.com list.

Gillies was scheduled to give a presentation to a group of structural engineers and he wanted detailers to provide him with a list of their "pet peeves." A long list was generated and Darin agreed to let me print his "top ten" list:

1. Dimensions should be included on every plan (please don't make the detailer refer to the architectural drawings).
2. Show beam reactions on the framing plans.
3. Clearly show the top of steel elevations, especially where special conditions exist. Also, specify what TOS means on your drawings (steel, slab, stone, snow, etc.).
4. Note, if possible, areas that may be revised. There is nothing worse than detailing what is shown and then having it all change.
5. Please don't falsely economize your design by changing member sizes simply to save a few pounds of steel (that is, having a W10x15, W10x17, and W10x19 in the same area is often more expensive than simply using one size).
6. Show the edge of deck dimensions—it will often eliminate the need for an RFI.
7. Leave lots of room at elevators and stairs. The frame should be self-supporting (not CMU bearing). And use beams rather than joists in these areas since they always change and beams can often be more easily revised later in the program than can joists.
8. Please use correct weld symbols—and don't show continuous welds if they're not required. If you're not sure of a symbol, use a notation instead. Note also that edge slab pour stops should be intermittently fillet welded, and rarely continuous.
9. Please don't redesign the job during shop drawing review. The earlier you can notify the fabricator/detailer of changes, the less expensive it will be to make the changes.
10. And most importantly: Remember we're all on the same team. Detailers don't send RFIs to embarrass anyone. Detailers do need some direction. Let's all just be friends.

I couldn't have said it better!

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