

editor's note



FAMILY GET-TOGETHERS ARE ALWAYS FUN, BUT WHEN POLITICS IS THE SUBJECT DU JOUR THE ENTERTAINMENT VALUE IS RATCHETED WAY UP.

My oldest child is a complete political junkie and my extended family runs the gamut from far left to far right; we have a couple who are prone to believe just about any conspiracy theory, and my youngest son simply views the whole thing as entertainment and voices support for whoever stirs the pot the most.

For those of us in the design community and construction industry, this election cycle is important as much more than simple entertainment, but I rarely hear any candidates discussing the issues critical to us.

For example, we do hear some platitudes about the need for a strong infrastructure, but we don't hear a discussion about how to pay for a new transportation bill. Are candidates in favor of a gas tax hike (one of the most common proposals to pay for a new highway bill)? And we don't often hear any discussion about past expenditures, such as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which had an emphasis on "shovel-ready" projects rather than long-term solutions. As a result, less than 15% of the more than \$800 billion dollars was spent on new infrastructure assets. Was it a success and should it be repeated if we experience a similar downturn in the future?

There are general comments about global warming and the environment, but details are lacking. For example, what level of reduction (if any) of greenhouse gas emissions should be mandated by 2030? Should all federal projects require

LEED Gold certification (or an equivalent "green" certification)?

Some candidates talk the talk about strengthening American manufacturing. But as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe famously said, "God is in the details," and unfortunately, details seem to be in short supply these days. What should be done about currency manipulation? Are new anti-dumping provisions needed? How will we handle labor shortages brought about by a reduced workforce if undocumented (but employed) immigrants are deported? What about structural engineers who are here on H1-B visas?

Modern Steel is putting together a questionnaire for the 2016 presidential candidates. We'd love to hear your ideas on any issues that we should be asking about. If there's an issue on which you'd like to know a candidate's position, drop me an email at melnick@aisc.org.


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