



Photo: PCI

Those That Show Up Help Make the Rules

William Nickas, *Editor-in-Chief*

Midway through my career, I had the privilege to be appointed to serve as a state bridge engineer (SBE). Twenty days later, I attended the AASHTO Subcommittee on Bridges and Structures annual business meeting in Nashville, Tenn. Three days into the meeting my head was swimming with all the things going on and, at the same time, I was totally impressed with the group of minds assembled to improve the nation's bridge specifications. At the Wednesday evening ceremony, I sat with an SBE that had been working in that role for more than 20 years. After our lengthy dinner conversation, it was clear the relationship-building experience of these meetings never gets old or stale. It was a great conversation and an experience I would never forget.

During my SBE years, I was very fortunate to have a few advisors on staff and several consultants that really assisted me while in public service. Their insight and recommendations led me to some of the most talented resources in our industry. During my tenure I learned several lifelong lessons:


- Always work to expand your network.
- Listen carefully and appreciate the perspective of those contributing. In nearly every exchange, there is a thread of advice or unique solution offered but, more importantly, seasoned wisdom that will help you someday.
- And as Thomas Jefferson said, "Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude."

It is very easy to get entrenched in our own companies, local organizations, and the activities of

our families and communities. Expanding and building relationships is very important, but growing our minds and knowledge base is equally important. Over the last few months, there have been several bridge conferences and symposiums and it's difficult to attend them all, but these meetings shape our industry.

While attending an Association of General Contractors (AGC) meeting, a contractor was complaining about a specification change by a Department of Transportation. The AGC president just kindly checked his notes and replied, "I see your firm did not participate in the meetings held six months ago... Those that show up help make the rules." I have never forgotten that reply.

These bridge venues always provide lessons learned, as well as exposure to ground breaking technology from both the U.S. and international engineering community. Now working as part of an association staff, my travel takes me to a variety of meetings. These events are always eye opening. The assembled audience of professional members (consultants), owners, other industry organizations, contractors and direct/indirect customers, and suppliers often lead to the next innovative, game changing widget, system, or solution.

The *ASPIRE*TM team uses these professional venues to mine material and ideas we believe will benefit our readership. During this demanding economic period, it can be challenging to attend some of these events. If your travel is limited, let this publication assist you to reach your goals safely and provide an avenue to strengthen relationships within the concrete bridge industry. I hope you enjoy this issue of *ASPIRE*, the concrete bridge magazine. 



American Segmental Bridge Institute



American Shotcrete Association



Epoxy Interest Group



Expanded Shale Clay and Slate Institute



Portland Cement Association



Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute



Post-Tensioning Institute



Silica Fume Association

Editor-in-Chief

William Nickas • wnickas@pci.org

Managing Technical Editor

Dr. Henry G. Russell

Managing Editor†

Wally Turner • wturner@pci.org

Associate Editors

Emily B. Lorenz
Craig A. Shutt

Editorial Administration

James O. Ahtes Inc.

Art Director

Paul Grigonis

Layout Design

Tressa A. Park

Editorial Advisory Board

William Nickas, *Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute*
William R. Cox, *American Segmental Bridge Institute*
Dr. David McDonald, *Epoxy Interest Group*
Dr. Henry G. Russell, *Henry G. Russell Inc.*

Cover

96th Street Bridge over U.S. 169
Kansas City, Missouri
Photo: Burns & McDonnell.

Ad Sales

Jim Oestmann
Phone: (847) 838-0500 • Cell: (847) 924-5497
Fax: (847) 838-0555 • joestmann@arlpub.com

Reprints

Paul Grigonis • pgrigonis@pci.org

Publisher

Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute
James G. Toscas, President

Postmaster: Send address changes to *ASPIRE*, 200 W. Adams St., Suite 2100, Chicago, IL 60606. Standard postage paid at Chicago, IL, and additional mailing offices. *ASPIRE* (Vol. 7, No. 1), ISSN 1935-2093 is published quarterly by the Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute.

Copyright 2013, Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute.

If you have a project to be considered for *ASPIRE*, send information to *ASPIRE* 200 W. Adams St., Suite 2100 • Chicago, IL 60606
phone: (312) 786-0300 • www.aspirebridge.org • e-mail: info@aspirebridge.org

†*ASPIRE*'s managing editor, Wally Turner, has returned to active military service. The entire *ASPIRE* staff wish him well, and thank him for his continued service to our country.