



Photo: PCI

Interesting Times Provide Time for Reflection

William N. Nickas, *Editor-in-Chief*

These last eight months or so have been challenging, to say the least. Our communities, our industry, and all of us personally have been forced to adjust our daily routines to meet the demands of this new environment. Slowly, as we began to understand the limitations, restrictions, and safety protocols, we made the necessary adjustments that allowed us to continue to accomplish our work.

Zoom meetings, conference calls, and remote work suites are now the norm. And I found another tool that this pandemic uncovered: time for reflection. We'd been moving at such a hectic pace that this "forced inactivity" actually provided an opportunity to look back and recall the tenets that shape all engineers.

T.Y. Lin and Ned Burns dedicated their 1955 book, *Design of Prestressed Concrete Structures* (republished in 1963 and 1981 by John Wiley & Sons Inc.), to "engineers who, rather than blindly following the codes of practice, seek to apply the laws of nature." The need for such engineers is greater today than at any time in our history.

We continue to see unprecedented man-made and environmental disasters. Bridge stewards (owners), along with researchers, students, designers, contractors, and material suppliers, realize that making simple changes to existing specifications or design criteria will

not meet our future needs or demands. Our challenge is therefore to "apply the laws of nature," leverage new and emerging technologies, build stronger, more resilient communities, and provide state-of-the-art assets that enhance the lives of our customers and of society at large.

One constant in this drive toward a successful future must remain the quality of the engineering design team we assemble. We must select the right project lead and build a design team around the lead to manage the client's expectations while achieving the desired results. Establishing the right and best team from the outset is key to a successful outcome.

Tim Keller, Ohio Department of Transportation, in his Perspective on page 56 of this issue, "A Call to Action for All Bridge Engineers," discusses the significance of trust. We must build design teams with trust at the forefront. Design leads must have the freedom of action to push the design based on sound engineering principles and established, tried-and-true methods, all backed by the detailed mathematics that our industry demands.

This trust, built over time, establishes our credibility and enhances our profession. When disaster strikes, it is this trust that allows our political leadership to look to us to lead our communities through these events.

Love from my quarantined office to yours,

William

Readers Response

William & Reid:

I'm reading through my summer 2020 ASPIRE issue and I feel the need to compliment you and your staff on what a great magazine this is. This issue is the most informative and relevant publication with "useful" information for all levels of bridge engineers I think I have ever read.

Great Job and Keep it up!!

Regards,

Jerry

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The Highway 43 Mississippi River Crossing in Winona, Minn. Photo: Ames Construction.

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