Let’s Incentivize Collaboration

The Construction Users Roundtable (CURT) has worked for years to figure out why construction documents are so inadequate for the purpose of building. What they found is that the poor status of working drawings is a symptom of a larger problem. They point to ‘a lack of cooperation and poor information integration.’ One potential solution is a form of contracting called Integrated Project Delivery (IPD).

IPD is a contracting delivery method whereby the owner, designers, and contractors all share in the risk and the rewards of a project. If people work well together and solve problems collaboratively, everyone wins. Each party has a portion of their profit in a pool to be divided later, based on project success. IPD is being driven by owners who realize there is tremendous waste and opportunity in the way construction has been traditionally contracted. IPD will continue to grow across our industry as more success stories occur.

Most of us have yet to have the opportunity to work on a true IPD project but that should not stop us from pushing for change. We can use our collective wisdom to come up with new ways to incentivize collaboration between designers and contractors. Many times a subcontractor is asked to reduce their price in order to be awarded a job. Rather than give money back up front, why not propose to give the client a credit each time the drawings are in good order well in advance of construction. If we need 12 weeks to plan our work, we need the drawings in good order 12 weeks before we start. We are happy to give the owner back a chunk of money if they can make that happen.

I look forward to seeing you at an upcoming ASCC event and hearing your thoughts on how we can continue to incentivize collaboration.

Executive Director’s Message

“A great leader looks for a new way every day.”

One of the numerous pieces of food for thought that resonated with me from the Disney Institute Leadership Excellence Class. For four days in June I attended this class in Orlando with 42 others of all ages and from all walks of life: church leaders, zoo managers, real estate moguls, government workers, manufacturers, and others.
I Just Want To Get Paid

Todd Scharich, Decorative Concrete Specialist

The age old problem of customers not wanting to pay for a finished project has been on my mind due to calls to the Decorative Concrete Hotline. Although there are dozens of reasons customers don’t want to pay, I have found it usually boils down to the following:

Unset & Unmet Customer Expectations – Many contractors are too busy working the numbers side of the sale, and forget about providing the owner a vision for the final product. As we know, creating decorative concrete is not like picking a paint color. It will be unpredictable to a degree, it is not perfect, it will age, and it is not maintenance free. These “features” don’t have to be negatives if addressed ahead of time. Sell it as unique, like natural materials, that take time to cure and mature, and require a little TLC to maintain their appearance.

In addition, many of our manufacturer members have visualizers and apps that help the contractor and owner create a mutual vision. I also encourage you to create an expectation sign-off sheet for your customer. I have seen many that use common sense, and even a little humor, to let the customer know we are dealing with concrete, and not a 3D version of what’s in the customer’s head. I have sat in court cases where I KNOW the homeowner is picking the job apart solely on the basis of unhappiness with their chosen colors and patterns. Using nit-picking lists, they challenge the integrity of the contractor to ultimately get a second chance.

Scammers – Sad but true, many customers are professional scammers. Contractors that use napkin estimates, verbal agreements, and other non-traditional deal documents will get burned. This past week, I helped a DCC member that unfortunately got taken by a general contractor that used the dangled carrot of future work to essentially steal a new patio. When challenged about their contract, our member said there was none, as it was a last minute “you help me out, and I will help you out” deal. I cannot imagine using this technique, but the DCC Hotline has provided far too many stories to think it doesn’t occur.

Poor Workmanship – I am happy to say I cannot remember a hotline issue that has resulted in a contractor not being paid due to poor workmanship. That does not mean that some repairs, or even a couple of replacements haven’t been made. Contractors sometimes have a bad day, a pop-up storm, or other issues that result in less than desirable workmanship. Although not endorsed by the ASCC, I have recently seen an uptick in a shaming technique on social media to combat poor workmanship in our industry. Fellow contractors are calling out their competition that are hurting our industry. Although I understand their reasoning, I would prefer to see contractors promote their own good work. Use ASCC tools like Guide to Selecting a Concrete Contractor, samples, portfolios and other non-traditional deal documents will get burned. This past week, I helped a DCC member that unfortunately got taken by a general contractor that used the dangled carrot of future work to essentially steal a new patio. When challenged about their contract, our member said there was none, as it was a last minute “you help me out, and I will help you out” deal. I cannot imagine using this technique, but the DCC Hotline has provided far too many stories to think it doesn’t occur.

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Safety Helmets, Not Your Dad’s Hard Hat

Joe Whiteman, Director of Safety Services

If you have been paying attention to new innovations or trends in the construction industry, or if you perform work for a select few general contractors, you may have already been introduced to safety helmets. That’s not to be confused with your typical hard hat that has been in the PPE arsenal for nearly a half century. Times change, as does technology. Among those changes, the construction industry is seeking a better and more substantial means of protecting arguably the most important organ in your body- the brain.

According to NIOSH, one quarter of construction related fatalities between 2003 and 2010 were due to traumatic brain injuries. Nearly half of those were connected to falls from elevated work. We have relied on the traditional hard hat to protect our heads while we perform work. However, if we
are truly honest, and would perform a thorough risk analysis on the tasks we do in the concrete industry, we would find ourselves lacking. Although the traditional hard hat protects the head from objects falling or being dropped on top of the head, work where the hat may be knocked off exposes our heads to potential traumatic injury.

Think about body mechanics setting or stripping wall or column forms, building edge forms, or even rodding or finishing concrete. Those tasks require regular movement in a backwards motion, or bending forward with our heads down. We often take our eyes off the path of travel to perform this type of work. Upon impact, the hard hat is most likely going to fall off. When that happens, we are exposed to impact with little to no head protection. This is just from a same level slip or fall. Should a fall be sustained from an elevated position, chances the hard hat will stay on are slim to none.

This is where safety helmets have recently advanced as an alternative for better protection. Their design features a chin strap to keep the helmet in place upon impact. There is padding, not only for the top of the head, but for the back, sides, and front as well. Two brands -- Kask and Petzl -- stand out due to testing to ensure their helmets meet ANSI Z89.1. They have also invested in R&D regarding comfort and accessories. Examples include hearing protection and built-in eye protection that would negate wearing safety glasses. The initial cost of the safety helmet is around $140; considerable when you compare it to the cost of the regular hard hat. However, when you factor in the savings of one potential head injury, the cost becomes negligible.

As mentioned, several general contractors have piloted a safety helmet initiative. I’ve learned that a few members of ASCC are doing the same! Stay tuned for next month as I follow up with a few of our members that have committed themselves to this initiative. I will get first hand feedback on the helmet, the advantages, disadvantages, and the overall experience so we can learn more about this safety practice that may not just be a trend, but here to stay.

**On-Line Learning Opportunities**

Bruce Suprenant, Technical Director

I hope you’re familiar with the ASCC on-line learning through the webinar series. ASCC offered 10 webinars in 2017 and has offered four in 2018. They are a great opportunity to learn from experienced presenters. While you might be aware of the ASCC webinars, ACI also offers online training through its ACI University. ACI individual members receive six ACI University tokens for use on select on-demand, online learning courses. As an ACI member, take some classes for free! ACI University is an online learning/training resource providing on-demand access to a wide range of concrete topics. Complete courses to earn CEU/PDH credits. And, participation in at least 10 hours of approved ACI continuing education seminars, webinars and/or online courses, combined with on-the-job experience, is an option for becoming recertified as an advanced finisher, concrete flatwork finisher and concrete flatwork associate.

Here is the list of on-demand classes that ACI University developed in 2017 and 2018. To find out more about the ACI University go to: [www.concrete.org/education/aciuniversity.aspx](http://www.concrete.org/education/aciuniversity.aspx)

**ACI On-Demand Courses (2017 and 2018)**

- **Innovation in Concrete Construction: How it Happens and Why it Benefits Us All**  
  Author: Kopczynski, Plue, Ellis
- **Coarse and Fine Lightweight Aggregates for Use in Concrete**  
  Author: Vaughn
- **Failures Related to Concrete Volume Change and Restraint**  
  Author: Fowler
- **The Use of Viscosity Modifying and Rheology Modifying Admixtures in Concrete**  
  Author: Harris
- **A Practical Approach to Designing, Placing and Protecting Mass Concrete**  
  Author: McPherson
- **Hot Weather Concrete—Best Practices and Lessons Learned**  
  Author: Antonmattei
- **An Overview of Chemical Admixtures for Concrete**  
  Author: Nmai
- **Cold Weather Concrete: Guide Updates and Field Applications**  
  Author: Holck, Garza
- **Cold Weather Concrete: Research on Placement and Early-Age Behavior**  
  Author: Kozikowski, MacDonald
- **Prevention Through Design—Design for Construction Safety**  
  Author: Toole
- **Overview of ACI 330.2R-17 “Guide for the Design and Construction of Concrete Site Paving for Industrial and Trucking Facilities”**  
  Author: Varner
- **Corrosion Protection Systems for Reinforcing Steel**  
  Author: Darwin

**Shopping Center Construction Conference Uncovers New Opportunities for Concrete Contractors**

Jon Hansen, Senior Vice President-Local Paving, NRMCA

Each year, for the past five years, the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA) paving division has exhibited at the annual International Conference of Shopping Centers (ICSC) RECon event held at the Las Vegas Convention Center the week before Memorial Day. For the first couple years, NRMCA showed several applications that might have been of interest to this group of shopping center and retail owners and facility managers. Three years ago, the shift to showing only concrete overlays of existing
asphalt parking lots proved to be a move in the right direction. Each year, attendee interest grew with an increasing number of decision makers wanting to know more, or as we came to say, they stopped and said, “I didn’t know you could do that.” Many share stories about wanting to break the constant cycle of increasing yearly expense to maintain their asphalt parking lots.

This year, NRMCA created a four-minute video showing before and after photos of concrete overlay projects, and the steps taken in evaluation, preparation, and paving on top of existing asphalt. NRMCA used footage of ASCC members SLV Quality Concrete and Swederski Concrete Construction Inc. projects. A 95-inch monitor placed in a 10 wide booth provided an over-powering presence which stopped a record amount of interested attendees.

“The number of leads and amount of potential overlay projects is in the millions of square feet, and will represent work from now until at least 2025 and beyond,” according to Phil Kresge, NRMCA v.p. of local paving.

What we need now is to build a group of contractors with the right equipment to pave these projects. NRMCA, along with the NRMCA/ASCC Joint Paving Committee and select local partners, will develop these leads. Utilizing NRMCA’s Design Assistance Program (DAP) and paving field team, we can sort, qualify, and do much of the leg work. But we need ASCC contractors on board to put together pricing and bring their expertise at the right time. Our appeal to contractors is “Are You Interested?” As mentioned earlier, this is not work for just this year. We see this as ongoing for years to come.

If you and your company are interested in paving opportunities, and want to learn more about how to construct concrete overlays of existing asphalt parking lots profitably, please respond to NRMCA/ASCC Joint Paving Committee chair Paul Albanelli at paul.albanelli@albanelli.net, Myron Hillock at mhillock@somero.com, Bev Garnant at bgarnant@ascconline.org, Jon Hansen at jhansen@nrmca.org or any member of the NRMCA/ASCC Joint Paving Committee.