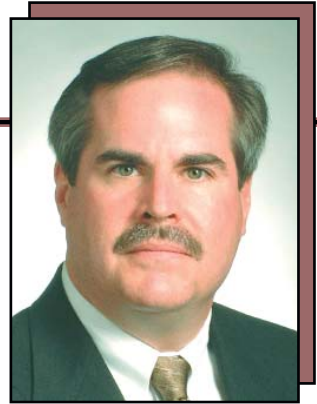


Editorial

Contributing Back to the Profession

By Greg Robinson, NCSEA Vice President



Each issue of STRUCTURE magazine provides the practicing structural engineer with articles that introduce new ideas and challenge traditional design methods. Each year we see new codes, revised codes and supplements. These codes and supplements provide the latest findings and criteria from which structural engineers design buildings. Many structural engineers prepare and present programs at conferences and seminars, to share their skills and knowledge with others. During disasters, many structural engineers assist with search and rescue and reconnaissance of damage.

In our hurry to get jobs “out the door”, we often fail to think about the origination of the seminars we attend, the articles we read, and the codes we must comply with and follow. Where do they originate? The answer is simple: Volunteers contributing back to the profession. They not only provide a valuable return to practicing structural engineers, but also to the public, our clients, and the owners.

“...provide a valuable return to practicing structural engineers...”

Only a fraction of structural engineers contribute back to the profession. Far too often, the same volunteers raise their hands and step up to provide their time and resources. While there are over 30,000 subscriptions to STRUCTURE magazine, attendance at national conferences and meetings is often less than 150. Furthermore, many of those attending are actually conference hosts and committee members.

Regrettably, structural engineers are often faced with deadlines that are unrealistic, and they struggle to balance family and career. However, if we, as practicing structural engineers, do not

contribute back to our profession, we can expect to see many of the traditional volunteers burn out and their efforts wane. We cannot afford to let this happen. Those efforts have led to improved codes, educational programs, and professional development, within both the structural and non-structural engineering communities.

Participation is actually pretty easy. There are 40 Structural Engineers Associations in the United States and Canada. These associations offer representation on local, regional and national levels. They provide an avenue to express particular interests and share ideas with others. A structural engineer can serve on committees or write articles in his or her areas of interest. Opportunities to participate and serve in SEI and CASE are also available. Simply attending and showing an interest in the efforts of a professional association is a significant benefit, to both the association and the profession.

Membership and participation in professional groups are not without cost, in both time and money. Firms are encouraged to offer reimbursement policies, for membership as well as attendance at professional functions. The return will be more than worth the effort, as young engineers learn about additional tools and methods. Resumes, both the firm’s and the employees’, will be enhanced by employees’ active participation in committee work. Engineers participating in conferences and seminars will almost certainly be exposed to designs typically not offered by a firm; and, this will allow their structural engineering firms to offer more services.

“Whether a novice or experienced, we all have something to contribute.”

Young engineers are encouraged to make time for professional meetings and seminars, and to make full use of firm reimbursement policies. Your participation will eventually prove to be very valuable, not only to your firm but to yourself, as you continue to gain engineering experience and interact with peers and mentors.

Whether a novice or experienced, we all have something to contribute. Young engineers have the opportunity to attend, participate, question, and learn from the experienced at the local, regional and national meetings. Those that are experienced have a wealth of knowledge that, if shared, can be used to advance the profession. Structural engineering, as well as leadership, marketing, and business skills, need to be shared and taught, for the profession to prosper. ■

Submitting articles to STRUCTURE® magazine is a simple process. Send your story idea or abstract to publisher@structuremag.org, and it will be forwarded to STRUCTURE’s Editorial Board for review. We look forward to your contributions!

