

Editorial | What Are Your New Year's Resolutions?

By John A. Mercer, Jr., P.E., SECB



I am committed to cleaning up my desk sometime in 2011. I cleaned it off sometime in 2010 and I was so proud. It lasted for a week or two, but it seems like one thing adds to another and here we are again, buried in paper, books, and magazines.

I've heard that a messy desk is a reflection of a creative mind. That gives me pause to consider whether or not I should even attempt to clean it. I can still find my pencils and pens, but where did I put that job file...?

The only other issue that I am committed to is my continuing education. I am signed up to try some of the webinar approaches to obtaining PDH's, but I still look forward to traveling in February to a southern location to spend a few days where there isn't any snow or ice. I also get to see some of you there as well. (I live in the beautiful state of North Dakota in case you were wondering.)

I have a question for you. In your opinion, whose responsibility is it to maintain your continuing education? Personally, I believe that it is every engineer's responsibility, not their employer's. "A carpenter without a hammer and saw doesn't build much". Some firms may offer a policy to participate in partial or even full reimbursement for continuing education expenses as a part of their benefits program.

Past experience has taught me that anyone considering starting their own firm should join ACEC and become a participating CASE member immediately. I joined ACEC for the insurance benefits when I started my firm, but didn't participate in any of the conventions or other activities for the first 12 years of membership. I missed on many education opportunities, not counting the relationships and networking I've been able to establish with other engineers like yourself. I discovered the true value of my membership to be centered in my *participation* in ACEC and CASE.

In the March 2008 STRUCTURE magazine Editorial, John Grieshaber, P.E. discussed the issue of mandatory continuing education (MCE) requirements and listed states' annual, biennial, or triennial PDH requirements to maintain licensing. At the time of its writing, 33 out of 55 registration boards required continuing education. How many of your registrations require continuing education?

I encourage you to take advantage of the perfect storm currently forming for CASE structural engineers to attend the CASE Winter Meeting, and leverage their travel expenses to stay on and attend the NCSEA Winter Institute to be held in Jacksonville, FL at the end of February 2011.

Now is a perfect time for CASE member firms and new structural engineering firm principals to make plans to attend both meetings. Get a bigger bang for your buck by attending the CASE Winter meeting and NCSEA Winter Institute, and receive PDH continuing education credits for the presentations you attend. Look for dates, times and accommodations information in other sections of this and future issues.

Looking forward to 2011, a CASE Risk Management Convocation will be held at the Structures Congress in Las Vegas in April 2011, *Don't Gamble on your Future*. CASE will discuss the following topics:

How Structural Engineers Can Work Effectively with Architects Who Use AIA C401

If your firm works as a sub-consultant to architects, examine CASE's Commentary on AIA Document C401, the *Standard Form of Agreement Between Architect and Consultant*. AIA Contract Document C401 incorporates by reference AIA Contract Document B101, the *Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect*.

The interplay between C401 and B101 cannot be over-emphasized. Using C401 without understanding fully the interrelationships with B101 is a recipe for disaster. This presentation will cover how the engineer's rights and obligations are impacted by these two agreements and CASE's recommended provisions to include in your contract with the architect.

The Changing Face of Indemnity: Meaner and Uglier!

This program will present an overview of some recent California cases having received national attention, which could present potentially disastrous results for the engineering community. The program will conclude with a description of some legislative and practical efforts to defend against this unfortunate tide.

New Tools for Managing Risk and Project Implementation

The CASE Tool Kit Committee has developed a number of new tools that will be presented in this session. *Developing a Culture of Quality* provides a white paper and PowerPoint presentation used to engage firm leaders in a discussion about their firm culture and key aspects that contribute to quality.

A new tool on staffing projections provides a method for firms to project future revenues and staffing demands based on contract values and potential work.

Managing Computer Software Use provides a white paper on key aspects and responsibilities of the project manager and principal in charge relative to software use on projects.

Lessons Learned from Arbitration, Mediation and Litigation

A panel discussion will focus on applying lessons learned from the speakers' involvement with arbitration, mediation and litigation. The speakers, who are a practicing structural engineer & arbitrator, an attorney specializing in construction law, and a professional liability insurance agent, will share some of their own lessons learned and anecdotes.

So there you have it. My winter and early spring schedule is set. How about yours? I will look forward to meeting you at one of our CASE meetings. Step forward and introduce yourself. ■

