

We SEE Above & Beyond!™

By Ryan Kersting, P.E., S.E.

As a teenager, I had a dramatic introduction to the important role that structural engineers play in our communities. I vividly remember the moment the ground started shaking as I sat in Candlestick Park with my mom and my brother awaiting the start of the third game of the 1989 World Series. It wasn't too long after the shaking stopped that images of the damage caused by the Loma Prieta Earthquake started appearing on the hand-held TV being watched by the people in front of us. I remember trying to process what just happened: feeling very thankful that the stadium remained standing while thinking about the damaged structures and the lives that were affected. At the time, I did not know if I wanted to become a structural engineer. However, I know that experience ignited a curiosity about what it takes for engineers to design the structures that give us the places in which we live, work, and play. Months of disruption and recovery further demonstrated the impact that structural engineers have on our daily lives and routines.

Like many of you, I decided to pursue a career in engineering because I loved math and science, but it wasn't a foregone conclusion that I would become a structural engineer. My dad was a pastor, my mom was a nurse, and professional engineers were not well known in the small town where I grew up. In fact, one of my elementary school teachers wanted to expose me to some math-related careers and arranged for me to visit a local architect's office (of all places!). In middle school and high school, I was introduced to careers in engineering. However, I also remember wanting to make sure a career in engineering would allow me to use math and science to connect with and impact my community (the influences of my parents clearly shining through).

In college, I was inspired by quotes from Herbert Hoover about the responsibility and opportunity engineers have to improve the way of life in our communities (<https://bit.ly/3G8L6AW>).

In my career, the idea that structural engineering was more than just math and science culminated at the kick-off meeting for a design-build project for a new medical center when a doctor gave the welcoming message to the entire project team. She simply, but passionately, told all of us that each time we picked up a pencil, turned on a computer, or put on a hard hat, our job was not to perform calculations, draw details, or even build the structure. Instead, our job was even bigger: to help the medical center treat cancer and eventually find a cure.

These memories about my path to becoming a structural engineer are a lead-in to an ambitious initiative NCSEA has recently embarked on: branding and marketing the entire structural engineering profession. By now, I hope you have seen some of the early announcements, posts, tweets, etc., as the campaign has been revealed with the brand tagline **We SEE Above & Beyond**. The campaign seeks to raise awareness of the structural engineering profession's vital role in society and how Structural

Engineering Excellence (SEE) goes above and beyond the calculations, details, and code requirements to thoughtfully and efficiently provide the spaces for our daily experiences and improve the safety and resilience of our communities.

NCSEA has enlisted the expertise of an outside agency to develop the content and strategy in close collaboration with a nimble Steering

Committee (members listed below) and the NCSEA Board. While the initial efforts target telling the story of the SE profession, raising awareness, and strengthening partnerships within the AEC industry, future efforts include outreach to the general public and students of various ages. The current branding and marketing materials have been created for use in social media by both NCSEA and state and local

structural engineering organizations in their local markets.

A companion website, www.weseeaboveandbeyond.com, features some of the key campaign messages aligned with the "We SEE Above & Beyond" brand, including:

- We SEE the "big picture" vision of a project, its desired outcomes, and its intended impact.
- We SEE the structure above, below, in front, and behind the user's experience.
- We SEE the safest, most efficient path for loads so that structures are safe and economical.
- We SEE construction solutions using proactive leadership, communication, and creative problem-solving.
- We SEE our role in helping to form resilient communities.

The website also provides additional resources of interest to the AEC community and the general public.

Ultimately, this campaign will demonstrate how structural engineers' vision, technical expertise, and leadership transcend the basics of code-minimum safety and provide the backbone for the buildings, bridges, and other structures that support almost every daily experience in our communities. Having individual engineers and firms like, share, and re-tweet the campaign messages will help spread the word even further, enhancing the profession's image and raising awareness about what we do.

Embracing opportunities to show and share how We SEE Above & Beyond will make our profession more remarkable and our careers more meaningful and rewarding. Ideally, the campaign will inspire the next generation of structural engineers to join us. Along the way, I hope it inspires you, your colleagues, and our entire profession to continue to SEE Above & Beyond too!▪

Ryan Kersting is an Associate Principal with Buehler in Sacramento, CA and is currently serving as Secretary on the NCSEA Board of Directors.



NCSEA Branding and Marketing Campaign Steering Committee:

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