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Advance Precast Through Education

I am pleased and honored to serve as the 52nd Chairman of PCI. I look forward to representing the PCI members' interests as well as working closely with the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, PCI staff, and the membership at large. The cumulative experience and wisdom of these groups is very impressive, and they are well equipped to deal with the challenges facing PCI and our industry.

One of the major initiatives I will be supporting this year is the need for PCI to be more involved in educational activities. PCI needs to further develop its educational programs to meet the needs of the industry. This initiative must be both broad and sustainable to increase our market share. PCI, in cooperation with its regional affiliates and member companies, must take a more active role in helping educate and transfer the technical knowledge developed over the last 50 years to decision makers who influence market share.

There are currently many educational initiatives under way at PCI. The following are the top 10 in different stages of development:

1. Seminars showcasing the Sixth Edition of the *PCI Design Handbook* are under way. This is a great opportunity for practicing professionals and producer members to learn about recent changes in building codes and standards. PCI is also developing a seminar series on the design of blast-resistant precast concrete structures.

2. PCI regional associations have active seminar and box lunch programs that educate individuals within their regions on topics such as architectural precast, bridge design, hollow-core, parking structures, and total precast solutions.

3. The newly formed PCI Continuing Education Committee (**Helm Wilden**, chair) is developing several seminar programs. Also, PCI is currently searching for a full-time director of education to add to its staff. This person will be responsible for coordinating all PCI educational activities, from student education to professional development.

4. The PCI Board of Directors recently voted to support additional educational activities (including continuing education programs) through proper funding.

5. Individual producer and professional members are taking a more active role in education by partnering with universities and colleges to co-sponsor and co-teach courses on architectural and structural precast concrete.

6. The PCI research and development program is participating in a million-dollar research project on the Development of Design Methodology for Precast Diaphragms. Through various *PCI Journal* papers on this research, our industry is learning valuable information on the behavior and design of precast concrete diaphragms.

7. PCI is collaborating with the American Concrete Institute (ACI) to develop a parking deck seminar, which will be held at various locations throughout the country in 2006.

8. PCI is increasing its involvement in monitoring code activities as well as formulating a long-term strategic plan to address code issues, problems, and opportunities. This process involves providing members with continuing education on codes and conducting research to influence relevant code issues.

9. PCI is set to publish a revised *Fire Manual* with the International Code Council (ICC). This is a first for PCI—co-branding a publication with the ICC. Also, the PCI publication department currently has several manuals in production, all of which will provide future educational opportunities. The *Design and Typical Details of Connections for Precast and Prestressed Concrete*, the *Comprehensive Seismic Design Manual*, the *PCI Manual for the Design of Hollow Core Slabs*, and many other publications are in various stages of completion.

10. Last but not least, our plant and field certification programs continue to be a primary education link between PCI and its producer members. Schools, certification exams, and plant audits are all tools PCI is using to educate its members on proper and safe methods of manufacturing and constructing with precast/prestressed concrete.

In closing, I will echo the final message from our previous chairman, Tom D'Arcy (*PCI Journal*, Nov-Dec 2005, p. 13): Please get involved. If your business or profession is involved in this great industry, I urge you and your fellow employees to be involved in PCI, its committees, and most importantly, its educational activities.