PCI prepares members for sustainability codes

In early February, the PCI Sustainability Council outlined to the PCI Board of Directors the first phase of the PCI Sustainable Plant Program. The voluntary program was developed in cooperation with the 2020 Vision Committee of the PCI Quality Assurance Council and represents an important first step in benchmarking our industry for sustainable operating practices.

When PCI first formed the Sustainability Council and the 2020 Vision Committee, few PCI members were involved with LEED-certified projects, only a handful of members had LEED accredited professionals on staff, and sustainable building codes were virtually nonexistent. Since then, the number of sustainable building projects has grown dramatically, and sustainable design and construction have grown increasingly complex. It is now clear that sustainable building codes will have a major impact on the construction industry in the coming decade. PCI is committed to enabling our producers to be proactive participants in this movement.

The goal of phase 1 of the Sustainable Plant Program is to help PCI members prepare for the future by beginning to track key data. These data will quantify environmental effects, identify opportunities to improve plant practices, and position members to take advantage of the growing sustainable building market. Phase 1 asks participating plants to gather data in several broad categories. Based on these data, PCI will benchmark current material usage and energy consumption to develop guidelines for improvement. In the future, tracking these data is expected to become necessary to demonstrate compliance with sustainable building codes and standards.

The initial data from PCI's life-cycle analysis research (funded in collaboration with CPCI—our Canadian counterpart—and other industry partners) made it clear that opportunities exist to improve the environmental performance of our plants and products, particularly in the areas of energy consumption, material use, and transportation effects. Many improvements will have the added benefit of reducing operating costs. We expect this program to lead to better ways to do business and to allow our products to become even more competitive in the marketplace.

PCI is committed to collaborating with our members and industry partners to provide the tools and resources needed to improve our industry's performance. The PCI Sustainable Plant Program creates a significant business opportunity in anticipation of code-driven requirements that we expect to see adopted in the near future.

James E. Sorensen | 2010 PCI Chairman
EnCon United | Denver, Colo.