

Excellence – Redefined!



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Forty-nine years ago, PCI started its design awards program, initiating the search for excellence in design and construction using precast concrete. But how does one define excellence?

Excellence is more than just doing a great job; it is the expansion of ideas and exceeding of expectations that comes when we push ourselves beyond our comfort zone. Not only do great innovations result, but we also grow professionally, personally, and as an industry.

This can be applied to virtually anything in life and is especially true in the building industry. Some of the most innovative buildings result from taking a chance on something new. The precast concrete structures industry has been working with designers to “push the envelope” with what is possible with precast concrete.

Today, precast concrete helps architects and stakeholders achieve sustainable, scheduling, and budgetary goals in essentially every building type, from low-rise schools to high-rise condominiums. Precast concrete is a versatile material and system—structurally, aesthetically, and architecturally. It is getting thinner and lighter, spanning farther, being erected more quickly, and providing higher-quality finishes. It is being used for both the structural and the envelope systems of buildings, helping to really optimize projects.

The winning projects of the 2011 PCI Design Awards highlight many of these features and innovations and also demonstrate precast concrete’s versatility. This issue showcases 20 buildings that have “pushed the envelope” a bit further, redefining excellence. Some projects used ultra-high-performance concrete to greatly reduce the thickness and weight of precast concrete panels; others used precast concrete to accomplish completely new integrated designs, such as incorporating a quick turnaround operations facility into a rental car parking structure or designing a structure within a structure as with North Central College.

Almost all of the projects included various levels of sustainable design and took advantage of precast concrete’s many sustainable features to reach the goals they sought. Let this issue’s innovative projects spark your own imagination so that you too can redefine excellence in your next project.

I challenge all of you to continue to redefine excellence and push the boundaries even further. Then enter your project into next year’s special 50th PCI Design Awards. Entries will start being accepted in January. Show off your exceptional precast concrete projects and be an inspiration to your peers and generations to come.



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ASCENT On the cover: North Central College (see page 21)

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