

Innovation in Design, and in Learning

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Since its introduction, America has had a love affair with the automobile, and that love will not abate—as recent high gas prices have shown. This relationship, which continues to grow, greatly impacts our infrastructure and built environment. For example, we need places to park the increasing number of automobiles as people drive to work, school, shops, movies, their condos, etc. A key concern today has become how we accomplish this in a sustainable way.

Sustainably-designed parking structures can reduce expansive land use for surface parking, minimize heat island effects, and reduce negative impact to the environment. This issue of *Ascent* offers a series of articles to help designers meet sustainable design requirements and achieve LEED Certification, provide greenery, and reduce life-cycle costs. There are also some fantastic project photos in our new photo book section, “The Aesthetic Versatility of Precast,” on pages 34-37.

However, parking structures are only one building category requiring new ideas to meet owners’ demands. These demands help drive the need for ongoing continuing education. PCI offers a variety of continuing education programs, including an article in each issue of *Ascent*. Simply read the article, take the test at the end, and submit it to PCI for C.E. credit. This issue’s article is on *Acceptability of Appearance*, starting on page 49.

Expanding on that need, PCI has introduced the **PCI eLearning Center**. This online system provides free, continuing-education courses 24 hours a day, 7 days a week that can be used from the comfort of your own office, home, or beach chair, if you are so lucky.

Courses are registered with the American Institute of Architects for Learning Units. Additionally, courses qualify for Professional Development Hours (PDHs) in all 50 states and you can print your certificate when you have completed a test. Some courses also qualify for USGBC credit, which is now required for maintaining your LEED AP credentials.

Already there are seven great courses posted, with new courses being added often. There is even a course on parking structure design. To learn more and set up your personal account visit www.pci.org/elearning.

PCI also offers free, monthly webinars on a variety of topics. May’s webinar is on the History of the Parking Structure and June’s is on Sustainable Design of Parking Structures. To register, and for more information, visit www.pci.org/webinars.

These programs can help ensure that you remain on the cutting edge of new technologies and design ideas that will aid in meeting owners’ goals.



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On the cover: San Jose International Airport (see page 42)

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