

50 Years of Award-Winning Innovation



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For 50 years, the Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute has honored innovation and creative design techniques in its Design Awards competition. The program has expanded since its first awards in 1963 to encompass more categories and more types of designs. That expansion indicates that innovation continues, as designers push the material in new directions—and precasters respond to the challenges.

In that first competition, one winner and eight honorable mentions were singled out. In 1993, the competition honored nine buildings. In 2012, we highlight 18 buildings, as designers use precast concrete in a more diverse array of building types in new and creative ways that deserve the spotlight.

Precast concrete is being used more and more to help projects meet, and exceed their program goals: during design, construction and operation. Designers turn to precast concrete due to its range of capabilities, and its ability to be optimized and integrated with other systems. Some of those most often mentioned capabilities in awards entries are:

- **Unique colors and textures.** Precast concrete's aesthetic versatility continues to expand, with this year's judges awed by some of the capabilities they saw.
- **Detailing.** The capability to cast multiple colors and textures into one panel, as well as create dimension and textures with formliners, continue to grow. This detailing provides aesthetic detail that would destroy budgets if tried with other materials.
- **Accelerated construction.** Entrants often cite precast concrete's ability to be erected quickly. Being able to continue erection during the winter, or other inclement weather also kept many of the projects on schedule.
- **Precast concrete structural systems.** PCI introduced the All-Precast Concrete Award in 2004 to honor projects that used both precast concrete structural and architectural systems. The synergy creates multiple benefits unavailable any other way and makes this a growing approach for designers.
- **Economy.** The variety of cost savings precast concrete provides in the short term, through accelerated construction, jobsite safety, and precise scheduling, combine with long-term savings from lowered life-cycle costs and long-term durability.
- **Energy efficiency.** Precast concrete insulated sandwich wall panels often are cited by designers for their capabilities in providing continuous thermal insulation while also producing a finished interior wall that eliminates drywalling.
- **Sustainable design.** PCI introduced the Best Sustainable Project Award in 2006 because designers were often citing the owner's desire to integrate sustainable-design concepts and achieve LEED certification as the reasons that precast concrete was specified.

New techniques and concepts are making these benefits even stronger, ensuring that designers will continue to turn to precast concrete when challenges arise.

The question is: Are you helping that push? Do you consider the possibilities that precast concrete can offer in each project? Do you reach out to precasters with design challenges to learn what solutions they can provide to achieve the most cost-effective, quickly constructed, and aesthetically pleasing project?

Our goal with this magazine, and with the resources available at www.pci.org, is to help you achieve success and meet owners' growing needs. We hope the projects in this issue will inspire you to greatness and to earning your own PCI Design Award.

ASCENT

On the cover: 50th annual PCI Design Award-winning projects (see page 13)

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