

Keith Wallis Jr.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Be prepared

As Mike Lanier (the best meeting notetaker I have observed) remarked to me after one of my first PCI Board of Directors meetings as the Quality Activities Council chair in 2007, “Remember the Boy Scouts’ motto, ‘Be Prepared.’” What’s ahead, and are we prepared? If we have the answers to those questions, we can solidify the future of our businesses.


Our industry has had a huge shift in workload in a matter of six or seven years. I hear the rumblings about the coming economic recession. Unless you have been through a financial downturn several times, you may question whether another economic recession is in our future. During my 40 years as a precaster in southern Missouri, I have experienced five economic recessions and the coming one will be my sixth. Previous recessions have taught me to forge ahead and be prepared.

I remember that I laughed respectfully during the last recession when a fellow committee member asked, “How can you solve the problem of uneven workload and employee requirements in the plant?” Solving the problem of an uneven workload in a precasting plant would be like having a goose that lays golden eggs. During good times in the past, a precaster’s growth was limited by the number of forms it had. Today, capacity appears to be limited by the ability to gain and retain workers. How do we solve the worker issue?

At the summer 2018 meeting, the PCI Board of Directors approved strategic goal 3.0: “Enhance Members’ Businesses.” These four main points were identified during the lengthy board session:

- Improve workforce development by increasing members’ ability to attract, train, and retain capable, knowledgeable, and engaged employees.
- Increase the safety of precast concrete plant and field operations in order to gain and retain employees.
- Increase opportunities for members to improve operations through innovation.
- Increase opportunities for members to enhance business relationships with peers, suppliers, and customers and make PCI chapters more effective.

Due to budget constraints at PCI, there is currently insufficient funding for all of the items identified in strategic goal 3.0, but that should not stop members from trying to make progress on this goal. If we get together as groups to share successes and failures in these areas, maybe we can learn from each other without much expense. Videoconferencing platforms can be used as a way to meet virtually and exchange ideas. We need volunteer leaders to step forward to champion these objectives. Please contact the respective committee chairs or me with any ideas you have or with your willingness to serve. Our industry cannot grow without either a solid workforce or technology that allows us to do more with fewer workers.

As incoming chairman of PCI, my message to our members and partners is: this truly is “Your PCI.” And because it is Your PCI, it requires involvement. With the framework of the new Strategic Plan and your energy, we can ensure that you and Your PCI are prepared. 



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