

Resilient, efficient, versatile

We have finally made it to 2021, and by all accounts, our industry fared relatively well throughout what was a very difficult year. As a testament to that, this year's PCI Design Awards program has once again produced a raft of notable projects.

The focus for this year's awards was to showcase projects that demonstrate the versatility, efficiency, and resiliency of precast concrete, and this year's projects did not disappoint. The PCI-certified precast concrete producer projects showcase the many innovative ways precast concrete can be used to cut erection times and reduce the need for crowded jobsites while delivering beautiful, resilient, and cost-effective structures that can weather crises for decades to come.

Consider the Smithfield Middle School gymnasium addition in Texas, where designers used long-span roof double tees supporting superimposed live loads of 100 lb/ft² (4.8 kPa) precast concrete to create a durable storm shelter that can protect 1000 students and faculty from any storm.

Or Clybourn 1200, the mixed-use, mixed income redevelopment project on Chicago's North Side that leveraged precast concrete to create a cost-effective 157,000 ft² (14,600 m²) building that beautifully reflects the architectural character of the neighborhood while providing a sustainable living, working, and community space for all of its residents.

Or the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway Bridge in Louisiana, where designers used precast concrete to add twelve 1008 ft (307 m) long pullover lanes at multiple locations across the bridge, giving the more than 40,000 daily commuters a safe space to pull off when an accident occurs.

These are just a few of the many exciting ways this year's PCI-certified precast concrete producers found new ways to use the distinctive attributes of precast concrete to the benefit of project owners and the community.

This year's theme is also important because it reflects the industry itself.

The pandemic created unprecedented chaos across the construction industry, but throughout 2020, our members demonstrated incredible resilience and versatility in the face of this crisis. Our ability to adapt to the challenges we have faced and to find new ways to safely and efficiently meet client needs proved that we don't just have a versatile material, we have a versatile industry. And we are becoming more resilient every day.

As we look to the future, we can take the lessons learned during 2020 to make ourselves even stronger, and I predict that our industry will continue to thrive in the years to come. Surviving this crisis has made us more innovative, more collaborative, and better able to find opportunities where others only see risk.

I also want to note that this will be my last letter as chair, as I wrap up my role as chairman in February, so thank you for welcoming me and for helping me lead this great organization during such trying times.

I am excited to now pass the baton to our new chair, Dennis Fink, president of Northeast Prestressed Products. I have had the good fortune to collaborate with Dennis on many occasions through our work on PCI's Board of Directors and in business on a number of innovative projects. I am confident that he is the ideal leader to help us move forward. Dennis is an innovative thinker and will be a powerful advocate for our industry. We are fortunate to have him in this role.

I hope you will join me in welcoming Dennis as the new chair of PCI and sending congratulations to all of this year's PCI Design Awards projects. 🎉



J. Seroky

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