

Mason Hardaway Lampton

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Pushing precast in new directions


In this issue of *PCI Journal*, we highlight all of our amazing PCI Design Award winners for 2018. Reviewing the details of these projects makes me realize just how innovative our members can be. This year's winners took precast concrete design to new heights, creating massive domes, floating pontoons, and bridges that were rebuilt in a matter of weeks.

Too often, precast concrete is viewed as the simple workhorse of the construction industry, but these projects remind us all of the incredible versatility, adaptability, and aesthetics that can be accomplished with this material. I hope their achievements inspire all of us to push our designs further and to communicate its potential and performance capabilities to architects, departments of transportation, and other clients we encounter.

One way these projects have inspired me is in thinking about the next generation of parking facilities. In October, I attended a CEO summit at the PCI Committee Days and Membership Conference, where a facilitator challenged me and the other CEOs to discuss the future of the automotive industry. As we talked about the future of electric vehicles and autonomous cars, I couldn't help but wonder how these trends change the way cars are stored and what that means for our industry. Nearly half of our members build parking structures or create related products and services, so any trends in the auto industry will have a direct and meaningful impact on our future work.

While I don't think driverless cars will be the norm anytime soon, we can't just think about the near term. When we build parking structures, we expect them to be around for decades, so we need to be cognizant of how they may be used 40 or 50 years from now. Will autonomous cars park themselves? Will parking structures need less headroom and adjacent space because they have no drivers? Will parking structures eventually be obsolete? And if so, how can we build structures today that will be more adaptable for other uses in the future?

I don't have the answers to any of these questions, but I think they are worth considering. Our industry was built by innovators who figured out how to use precast concrete to solve real-world construction challenges and to deliver more value to their clients. From the first double tees to advanced moment frame designs to the use of recycled glass and fly ash in concrete mixtures, we continue to evolve our products so we can meet the latest demands of the construction industry.

With this in mind, I am going to challenge my own team to push our use of ultra-high-performance concrete in new directions, and I will look to PCI members to help us chart that course. The collaboration that occurs in our organization has always motivated me to do more. As you review the award-winning projects in the PCI Design Awards supplement and ponder the future of precast concrete, I hope you will look to your fellow members for guidance and inspiration as well. 



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