

A Day to Anticipate

BY TASHA WEISS

Begun in 2009 as a robust, grass roots-level effort, SteelDay has grown into a pre-eminent national event, earning its annual mark on the calendars of industry professionals throughout the U.S.



No Wheels on SteelDay?

For those who were unable to leave the office this year, AISC offered a live online presentation on “Practical Steel Metallurgy for the Structural Steel User,” presented by Doug Rees-Evans of Steel Dynamics, Inc. It attracted a record-breaking webinar attendance with nearly 1,400 individual connections.

If you were out at an event or just couldn't make the webinar—don't fret! A recording of the presentation is now available for free online viewing on the AISC website at <http://bit.ly/oBAMej>.

Structural engineers, architects, fabricators and others in the steel construction industry will learn valuable information about the properties of steel and how they affect steel behavior. The presentation provides practical information on steel metallurgy and addresses common questions such as:

- Iron and Steel: What is the difference?
- How can a steel mill control chemistry? Isn't the chemistry dependent upon what scrap is used?
- Why are there multiple grades of steel?
- What is the basis of a Mill Test Report?

Registrants can download the presentation slides prior to viewing the webinar and will receive complete instructions for accessing the webinar on the AISC website at <http://bit.ly/o4QhwG>.

Upon completing the webinar, you can earn CEUs/PDHs by passing an online quiz available at no charge through the AISC Bookstore at <http://bit.ly/pPyMQb>.

IN SEPTEMBER 2009, if we were to ask you, “What are you doing for SteelDay?” you may have given us a puzzled, unknowing look—or thought it was just another gimmicky, themed “Day,” (“Talk Like a Pirate Day,” anyone?) purely intended to draw attention to ourselves. Fast forward to this year's event; we asked many of you that same familiar question and found your reaction to be quite different. In fact, you may already be looking forward to 2012.

SteelDay's “Have You Seen What We Do?” theme is not merely a rhetorical question. It is a literal call to action encouraging everyone within the steel industry and elsewhere to partake in a day of learning and interaction, and observe a process that so many of us read about but rarely see firsthand. AISC, its members and partners, have stepped up to the plate each year to offer valuable and fresh opportunities for all interested parties to see how the industry is building high-performance and sustainable projects, experiences that likely wouldn't have happened without this unique platform.

At Central Texas Iron Works in Waco, Texas, a group of more than 40 students learned about the fabrication process and 3D detailing software, which will help them tackle practical issues in steel construction. “These trips give our students a unique opportunity to see facilities and operations related to steel construction that they would not otherwise have a chance to see,” said Michael Engelhardt, Ph.D., a professor at the University of Texas at Austin. “It enhances what they learn



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- ▲ Attendees on a mobile tour of the Gerdau Midlothian Mill observe how steel is recycled and produced.
- ▼ Federal Highway Administrator, Victor Mendez, lends a hand to students from Howard University, participants in the 2011 AISC/ASCE Student Steel Bridge Competition. The students assembled and displayed their scaled steel bridge in a mock race against Virginia Tech as part of a pre-SteelDay transportation and engineering event at the U.S. Department of Transportation in Washington, D.C.



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▲ SteelDay attendees get an up-close view of steel in construction at the First Baptist Church project site in Dallas.

in the classroom, and the up-close, hands-on experience they gain allows us to address a greater breadth of topics related to practical issues in steel construction.”

And SteelDay proves to be just as an invaluable opportunity for experienced AEC professionals, such as Tom Kunsman with HWH Architects—Engineers, Cleveland. “At Steel Dynamics, a steel mill [in Indiana], this had been a first chance to visit a mill for one member of my group who had been an engineer for 30 years,” Kunsman said. “For me, 17 years, also a first.”

Sue Rasmussen, P.E., a senior design engineer with Siemens Industry, Inc., Waukesha, Wis., attended a facility tour of Independence Tube in Marseilles, Ill., “It’s not often I get to see how the members I design with are made. As we walked through the stored bundles of tubes my coworker commented, ‘Sure makes you want to build something.’ To which I could only respond, ‘yes!’”

Hosts and attendees alike have realized and reaped the mutual benefits that SteelDay provides, and it shows in its growth each year. More than 10,000 people attended nearly 200 free events across the U.S. on September 23 for the third annual event, drawing in thousands more attendees than in prior years with an increased variety of events—ranging from the very simple (“come on over and we’ll give you a tour,” or “learn more about this hot topic at our seminar”) to the very complex (“we’ll take you on a journey span-



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ning the entire supply chain,” or “let’s explore this new job site”), and everything in between.

“SteelDay’s theme has truly been embraced,” said Chris Moor, AISC director of industry initiatives. “The lure of witnessing the day-to-day capability of the steel industry seems to provoke an increasing curiosity from the construction industry. It’s just such a great opportunity for the AEC community and others to see some amazing machinery and technology, network and ask questions without having to go very far and without having to spend any money—crucial in these times.”

Not unlike SteelDay in the past two years, architects, engineers, contractors, university faculty and students, government officials, and the general public visited steel mills, fabricators, service centers, galvanizers, and other steel facilities to see the industry’s latest innovations in action and learn directly from industry experts. Steel facilities throughout the country opened their doors for tours, demonstrations, presentations and other celebratory activities.

“I have thoroughly enjoyed every SteelDay and taken advantage of the special opportunity to meet our members and learn more about their capabilities,” said Roger E. Ferch, P.E., AISC’s president. “Its first year I joined the flagship celebration in Chicago at Millennium Park—a wonderful networking event that also honored downtown Chicago’s great structural steel heritage. Last year, I ventured to North Carolina and spent the day with Buckner Companies, viewing their crane and fleet GPS demonstrations. And, finally, this year I traveled west to Salina, Kansas, and was one of hundreds of guests at the PKM Steel Service, Inc. celebration featuring many supplier booths and a tour of Valmont Coatings/Salina Galvanizing.”

A New Approach

Inspired by the “Have You Seen What We Do?” theme, this year’s events essentially took shape and individually grew into their own unique gatherings. Activities evolved and hosts put forth a concerted effort to reinvigorate their event experience for both new and returning guests.

For example, Gerdau Ameristeel has hosted an event every year since SteelDay’s inception. The first two years, they were part of the North Texas Integrated Tour that took attendees through their Midlothian, Texas, mill and three other local steel facilities: a

service center (Metals USA), a structural steel fabricator (Qualico Steel Company, Inc.), and a galvanizer (Sabre Galvanizing). This year, the company decided to provide a new perspective.

“Entering into our third year of SteelDay events, we believed it important to breathe some new life into our approach,” said Matthew Gomez, S.E., P.E., national sales manager, construction solutions, Gerdau. “Our 2011 tours reflected comments from previous years’ attendees and allowed us to showcase steel in construction, as opposed to 2009 and 2010, when we offered attendees an up-close look at the steel supply chain.”

Attendees were guided through a tour of the Gerdau Midlothian Mill, where they witnessed how steel is recycled and produced. Following the plant tour, they visited the construction site of the First Baptist Church in Dallas, a \$100 million steel project in downtown Dallas. The event included an educational presentation by the general contracting, architectural and engineering teams.

Attendee Diane DeSimone, Ph.D., University of North Texas, Denton, Texas, commented on the event, “I took several pictures of the site to share with the UNT students majoring in Construction Engineering Technology. This was a project that was exciting to see, and one I will be able to share with students for a long time.”

Gomez added, “The combination of the steel mill tour with a notable construction project brought back some returning attendees, along with a strong showing of first-time participants. The feedback was positive, and has been each of the three years. It’s an excellent opportunity to educate professionals and students on the merits of steel construction, and we’ll continue to look for interesting and original methods of delivering this message.”

A Day for All

In addition to connecting AEC professionals with structural steel representatives at facilities in their local area, SteelDay also has given rise to special events in major cities, engaging government officials and the general public who recognize the steel industry’s contributions to the nation’s architecture and economy; its continuing progress; and the dedication of everyone involved.

If you’ve hosted or attended a SteelDay event, you’re probably familiar with the name Maria Blood, AISC’s marketing coordinator and SteelDay co-organizer. During her tenure, she’s attended two distinct SteelDay events in two different regions of the country.

The Creative Side of SteelDay

SteelDay’s “Have You Seen What We Do?” theme has also encouraged participation from the other side of the coin—show others what you can do creatively with steel.

This year AISC introduced a SteelDay Sculpture Competition for full and associate members to create and display their own innovative steel sculptures. Seven were entered in the contest and posted to SteelDay’s Facebook page where fans voted on their favorites. Because of the impressiveness of the sculptures and positive feedback they received, all entries will be going to the 2012 NASCC: The Steel Conference in Dallas where the winner will be decided by conference attendees.

View all of the sculptures on SteelDay’s Facebook page at <http://on.fb.me/uUrGws>.

Also in conjunction with SteelDay, AISC again sponsored a Student Photo Contest as one way to involve students in the industry’s largest educational and networking event. The contest is designed for college and university students to capture photos that best pictorially celebrate the visual experience of steel.

This year’s winning photo was taken by Krystal Brun, a senior civil engineering student at George Washington University, Washington, D.C. View her photo and all honorable mentions on AISC’s website at www.aisc.org/photocontest. You’ll also find the photos featured as Steel Shots on the MSC website, posted every Friday.

“Old Techniques Grasping New Technology”



“SteelDay in New York City proved to be a welcome networking and educational opportunity within the AEC community,” Blood said. “In its third consecutive year, SteelDay confirmed once again that there is a demand among construction industry professionals to learn more about the structural steel industry and their roles within it.” Although New York experienced a rain downpour that prevented a scheduled construction site tour of the International Gem Tower, the weather failed to dampen the enthusiasm of attendees. More than 100 New Yorkers gathered at McGraw-Hill headquarters for a networking luncheon and panel discussion led by some of the city’s most prominent members of the AEC community.

“The lively panel discussion included highlights of recent steel projects in New York and concluded with a question and answer session allowing attendees to interact with the panelists,” Blood said. “As the SteelDay audience’s discourse oscillated between steel projects of the past and future in New York, attendees at the more than 200 other SteelDay events across the country observed steel-making processes that would ultimately bring so many of the buildings in discussion to fruition. I reflected on my SteelDay experience a year earlier when I visited Gerdau’s steel mill in Midlothian, Texas and had toured a steel mill for the first time. The palpable power of the steel-making process had left an impression on me and other attendees.” Blood learned on that tour that many on the tour with her had been working with steel for decades, yet had never toured the inside of a steel mill or been exposed to the sights and sounds of the impressive process that results in the steel they use on a daily basis.

“Although my two SteelDay experiences differed in format,” Blood said, “their functions were undeniably consistent. SteelDay has distinguished itself not only as a valuable educational tool within our industry, but as a fundamental demand within the design community as evidenced by the thousands of individuals who have participated in events across the country each year.”

After participating in a steel erection rodeo last year at Davis Erection, a division of Topping Out, Inc., in Omaha, Neb., I was looking forward to a new experience in 2011. This year I attended a pre-SteelDay event on September 22 at the U.S. Department of Transportation in Washington, D.C., and watched student teams from Howard University and Virginia Tech, participants in the 2011 ASCE/AISC Student Steel Bridge Competition, demonstrate their engineering prowess through assembling and displaying their modular bridges in a mock race. FHWA Administrator Victor Mendez, ASCE president elect Andrew Hermann, Brian Raff from the National Steel Bridge Alliance (NSBA), and Lawrence Cavanaugh, president of the Steel Market Development Institute (SMDI) also spoke about the role of innovative technologies in bridge building. At the event, both student teams demonstrated the value of engineering education and training. Administrator Mendez said, “We certainly need all the bright, creative minds we can get to help build our 21st century transportation system, especially people who excel in science and math.”



In Chicago, AISC hosted a special SteelDay event at the Thompson Center Plaza. Guests networked while exploring a pictorial display tracking the history of steel-framed construction. The evening prior, AISC welcomed local structural engineers into its headquarters to meet with staff and attend a special continuing education seminar by AISC vice president and chief structural engineer, Charlie Carter, S.E., P.E., Ph.D. Carter presented on the great structural engineering insights of the late Kurt Gustafson.



Have you seen what we do? Whether you spend SteelDay next September touring a steel mill or attending an educational presentation, we can guarantee you will answer that question in the affirmative. **MSC**

SteelDay 2012 is scheduled for Friday, September 28. For more information, visit www.steelday.org.

Visit a Mill at The Steel Conference

Didn't see a steel mill on SteelDay? Gerdau is providing a tour of its Midlothian, Texas, facility as part of the 2012 NASCC: The Steel Conference, April 18-20, in Dallas. Attendees will be bused from the Gaylord Texan Convention Center to the mill where they'll see the entire process of how steel is made—from mounds of scrap to charging the furnace to continuous casting. You'll witness quality control processes in action and develop an understanding of rolling schedules and steel availability.

There is no charge to attend this event. However, space is limited. Learn more at www.aisc.org/nascc.