

editor's note



WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE SECTION IN MODERN STEEL CONSTRUCTION? Unless you're one of my kids, odds are it's Steel Interchange.

Since the section began more than two decades ago, every reader survey we've done ranks it as number one. Originally, the column featured questions sent in by our readers, which were then answered in later editions by other readers. Staff response was sometimes to answer questions, but more often to simply vet the answers provided by readers. With the creation of the AISC Steel Solutions Center, however, the column morphed into a section where almost all of the answers were staff-generated. And today, most of the questions aren't sent directly to the magazine; rather, the questions are taken from those submitted to the Solutions Center.

Each week the AISC Steel Solutions Center responds to nearly 200 questions (that's more than 125,000 inquiries since the SSC opened its doors in 2001). Despite this, hardly a day goes by where I don't see a question about structural steel posed elsewhere. I'm always amazed when someone asks about the *Code of Standard Practice* or has a question about composite beams and they don't simply email solutions@aisc.org. You'll usually get a response within one business day—and best of all, it's free.

The SSC is just one of AISC's free resources. While it's often difficult to navigate, there's a boatful of freebies on the AISC website (www.aisc.org), including all of the specifications and codes published by AISC. The best place to start is by clicking on "ePubs and FreePubs." Everyone can download design

examples, the shapes database, the latest issue of *Engineering Journal* and a lot more. We're even converting some items that used to be available for a fee, into free resources. For example, this fall we're planning on releasing the AISC Detailer Education Program as a free online course.

We've also posted videos of almost every NASCC: The Steel Conference since 2008. Simply visit www.aisc.org/2008nasconline or substitute any other year for 2008 in the URL, and you can access more than 750 hours of educational video on everything from steel joists to moment connections.

For those of you who are AISC members (and really, the cost is so nominal I'm always surprised when I encounter someone in the steel industry who isn't), the freebies are even larger. Members can download copies of all of the Steel Design Guides and every article from every issue of *Engineering Journal* (plus they receive substantial discounts you get on continuing education and printed publications).

But whether or not you're a member, the AISC SSC is free. So if you have a question, know that AISC has an answer.

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