

## editor's note



**LAST MONTH I ATTENDED A FANTASTIC AISC-SPONSORED SALES SEMINAR FEATURING MY FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE JIM PANCERO.** Among the many things Jim talked about was that cost shouldn't be the deciding factor.

And while he was specifically talking about selling your products or services, it made a great impact on how I think about steel and AISC. When we compare steel and concrete, we often talk about cost—but we probably shouldn't bother. Instead, we should be talking about *value*.

We should be talking about the value of using an AISC Certified Fabricator or Erector. We should be talking about the value of using a material with known and predictable characteristics. We should talk about the value added from a simple and clear *Specification* and *Code of Standard Practice*.

Talking about cost is too limiting—and frankly, often irrelevant. Comparing the cost of a framing system isn't enough. How does that frame impact the speed of the project, how does it impact the foundation, how does it impact the construction process and how does it affect the total cost of the project?

And value starts with knowing the quality and capabilities of your fabricator. When I talk with members—whether they're fabricators, erectors or structural engineers—I mostly hear about AISC's great programs. But I also hear two major complaints.

The first is that one party to the contract too often wants to modify the *Code of Standard Practice*. And the second is that the contractor tries to waive certification requirements.

And whenever I hear about the latter, I realize that we're dealing with a contractor more concerned with cost than with value. AISC's Certification program is designed to provide value through quality to both specifiers and program participants. If

you're a structural engineer, I urge you to read Chapter N of the AISC *Specification* and Chapter J of the *Specification for Structural Steel Buildings*. As Charlie Carter, AISC's vice president and chief structural engineer, stated: "Clearly, observation of bad practices will result in increased inspection. However, Chapters N and J go further; they require measures that are intended to prevent poor work in the first place. The requirements for written procedures and qualification of workers result in greater consistency, which also permits quality inspections to be focused where they can be most effective. The explicit requirements in these documents result in more uniform and effective quality control and assurance practices."

And what's the best way to ensure your fabricator has the written procedures and worker qualification to complete your project? Through specifying AISC Certification—and refusing to allow contractors to waive the requirement.

Want to know more about Certification (either as a specifier or a program participant)? This year's NASCC: The Steel Conference (March 25-27 in Nashville) offers a Quality Track. Check out one or more of the sessions (they're listed under Q in the program). To register, simply visit [www.aisc.org/nascc](http://www.aisc.org/nascc). Or visit [www.aisc.org/certification](http://www.aisc.org/certification) to learn more about the program.

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