

STEELDAY IS COMING!

BY JOHN CROSS, PE

This year's SteelDay continues the spirit of SteelDays past, while also introducing a couple of new elements.

HERE'S A MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTION: Why would the American Institute of Steel Construction purchase 2,805 pizzas?

- a. (really) hungry staff
- b. Domino's promised to build its next headquarters out of steel
- c. to celebrate SteelDay 2015 at engineering and architectural offices around the U.S.
- d. to break the *Guinness Book of World Records* for most pizzas ordered in a day

If you answered "c" you are correct. SteelDay 2015 was a great celebration, with over 9,000 participants at 53 events throughout the United States. Structural steel fabricators opened their shops and hosted open houses. Project site tours occurred in several cities. And AISC hosted a luncheon webinar, "Steel and the Phantasmagoria," seen across the country at 673 engineering and architecture offices and presented by AISC vice president and chief structural engineer—and soon-to-be AISC president—Charlie Carter.

But SteelDay 2015 is now a memory and all eyes are focusing on SteelDay 2016, which will be held on September 30th.

SteelDay 2016 will be the eighth annual national celebration of the structural steel industry. And it *will* be a celebration: a celebration of the contributions that structural steel and the thousands of individuals in the design and construction industry working with structural steel have made to the buildings, industrial facilities, bridges and infrastructure of this country.

Once again, many structural steel fabricators will be hosting open houses at their shops. Open houses present an opportunity for engineer, architects and students to look inside the "black box" and experience the process of detailing and fabricating structural steel. And other facility types, such as galvanizing plants, are also scheduling open houses.

Project site tours are also being planned in several cities across the country where signature steel structures are being erected. These events often include presentations by the project's designers, fabricators and erectors on the decisions and approaches used for the project. Site tours are a great means of understanding how other designers and fabricators approach difficult project challenges and address them with innovative steel solutions.

Open houses and site tours, along with registration instructions, are listed on the events page of www.steelday.org.

Incorporating Ideas

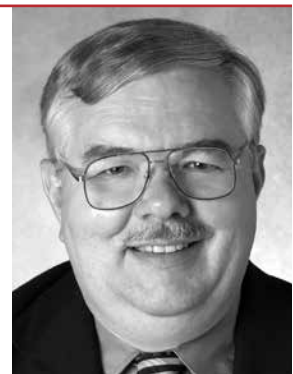
In addition to the live events, two new features are being added to this year's SteelDay. AISC has a long tradition of recognizing excellence in the design and construction of structural steel-framed buildings through the IDEAS² Awards program (IDEAS² stands for "Innovative Design in Engineering and Architecture with Structural Steel"). In the past, project submissions were due in early January and were judged by a distinguished panel of design and construction professionals with the winning projects announced at NASCC: The Steel Conference in late March or early April. But this year, the competition has been incorporated into SteelDay, and the submission deadline has been moved up to late August in order to provide an opportunity for "People's Choice" input into the judging process.

During the week of SteelDay—starting on Monday, September 26—design and construction professionals can visit the IDEAS² website (www.aisc.org/ideas2) to review the projects entered in this year's competition and cast a vote for their favorite project in several different categories.



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Movie Time

As for the second new feature, while SteelDay has traditionally included a complimentary lunch webinar, this year we have arranged for a series of screenings of a recently released documentary film *Bridging Urban America: The Story of Ralph Modjeski*. So who was Ralph Modjeski and why would AISC (and NSBA, the National Steel Bridge Alliance) be showing a documentary about his life on SteelDay?

In the early 20th century, Ralph Modjeski designed and built many of the bridges that spanned the great and powerful rivers of America. The Mississippi, the Missouri, the Columbia, the Hudson, the Ohio, the Detroit, the Willamette, the Maumee and the Delaware; these rivers and more were bridged through the work of Ralph Modjeski. While Modjeski adhered to the engineer's motto of "stronger, safer, cheaper," he brought an artist's touch inherited from his mother and cultivated by his love of Chopin and the piano to each project.

Modjeski began his career in the late 1800s and quickly learned that teamwork, creativity, improvisation and facing challenges head on were as important as basic engineering principles. In 1896, he was named chief engineer for the Rock Island Arsenal Bridge over the Mississippi River. Faced with the

weather-related failure of the crucial center swing span during construction, Modjeski didn't dwell on the fact that he had previously argued that the risk was too great and that construction should be delayed. Rather, he quickly engineered and supervised the construction of a temporary replacement span that minimized interruption of river traffic and allowed rail traffic across the Mississippi River.

Ralph's story is about more than the bridges he built. It is the story of an engineer who was innovative, competent, diligent and internationally recognized, yet was willing to listen to the advice of others and work along side the men and women building the bridges that continue to serve us today. While other engineers resisted input into their designs and peer review from other bridge engineers, Modjeski actively participated in group design efforts and partnerships, lending his expertise to others while learning from them. His life story is a case study for the practice of engineering.

Please visit www.steelday.org/webinar to check the showing times in your area and to register for the webinar. An online quiz will be available following the webinar for those wishing to obtain 1.5 hours of continuing education credit.

Have a Happy SteelDay! ■